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**THE ACQUISITION OF THE ENGLISH PRESENT PERFECT  
BY A SPEAKER OF BRAZILIAN PORTUGUESE**

**A Thesis**

**Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
University of New Orleans  
in Partial Fulfillment of the  
requirements for the Degree of**

**Masters of Arts in English Teaching  
in  
The Department of English**

**by**

**Eleomarques Ferreira Rocha**

**B.A. Universidade Federal da Bahia, 1998**

**May 2004**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study contributes to the debate about the importance of focus on form to adult second language acquisition with an investigation of a Portuguese-speaking adult's acquisition of English present perfect from a historical, correlational, and qualitative viewpoint. Using a husband—wife interaction in the L1, it investigates whether explicit grammar instruction and error correction can lead to automatic production. The focus of the study, the distinction between L1 present simple and L2 present perfect, is contrasted with a control distinction: L1 stative and L2 progressive. The importance of these distinctions is that both are semantically challenging for the L2 acquirer; therefore, they might require focus on form. This study argues against claims based on Krashen's input hypothesis that only comprehensible input can promote acquisition and that explicit data and negative evidence only affect performance. The results confirm the importance of noticing (Schmidt and Frota, 1986) as an essential aspect of adult second language acquisition. With a thorough look at the semantics of the present perfect, the study shows that focus on form is highly recommended for the acquisition of complex structures.

## CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

There is an ongoing discussion in second language acquisition research about how much formal instruction is necessary for grammar development. The debate about the importance of focus on form, DeKeyser (1998) points out, was extensive in the 1980's and gathered around the works of Krashen and Long. Krashen is well-known for his emphasis on implicit learning (acquisition) over attention to form (learning). Long, on the other hand, has argued that comprehensible input alone is not sufficient for ultimate attainment. Therefore, recent studies incorporating both trends have pointed to a more practitioner-oriented debate. Although the need for comprehensible input is thoroughly acknowledged, second language instruction has focused on what, how, and when to teach learners who are beyond the critical period. DeKeyser states that focus on pronunciation is always insufficient, given that ultimate attainment is rare—as shown in a case study of language aptitude by Ioup et al. (1994). Furthermore, vocabulary instruction is unnecessary because it can be learned implicitly. Morphosyntax then requires most emphasis since it is easy to learn but hard to acquire. DeKeyser mentions, for example, third singular –s, which Krashen (1982) classifies as formally simple, but Ellis (1990) as formally complex. Indeed, so complex is it that even native speakers of nonstandard dialects, with lifetime exposure, have trouble mastering it. One of the reasons, perhaps, is that their internal grammar would favor –s absence, which in turn would conflict with the standard English rule (Fasold, 1972; Labov, 1972). DeKeyser assumes that “if a structure... cannot be acquired without negative evidence, then a rather strong variant of focus on form, including rule teaching and error correction, will be required” (p. 43). This study intends to investigate how well rule teaching and error correction in one-to-one contexts can facilitate adult acquisition of one structure that contrasts in Portuguese and English, the present perfect.

The present perfect (e.g. *have written, has spoken*) has stood out as a challenge for ESL teachers in Brazil. Although Brazilians do have an equivalent structure in Portuguese, it corresponds to a distinctive semantics (as will be explained further in chapters 3 and 4). Thus, Brazilians tend to have trouble using the English present perfect correctly. Sometimes the equivalent does occur in Portuguese.

- (1) Tenho           trabalhado muito ultimamente.  
       (I)have(1sg) worked   a-lot   lately  
       “I have worked a lot lately.”

However, because of its restricted use to convey the notion of repetition and continuation, this pattern cannot be applied to other situations where English would require the present perfect. A common error among students is the use of the simple present for the present perfect. Students often produce sentences like \* *I work here for seven years*, which in Portuguese would be

- (2) Trabalho   aqui há sete anos.  
       (I)work(1sg) here has seven years  
       “I have worked here for seven years.”



Although there is a belief among ESL teachers that the present perfect does not require much emphasis because it is being blurred with the simple past, the issue requires a more careful look. For the purpose of this study, this question will be analyzed from a historical, qualitative, and correlational viewpoint. Regardless of what forms the perfect has historically adopted in American English (AmE) and Brazilian Portuguese (BP), speakers of these languages still communicate this aspect. However, given the semantic conflict between AmE and BP, speakers of BP might have trouble acquiring AmE perfect forms if they do not attend to such differences as those in (1) and (2).

Investigating the Brazilian usage of the American English present perfect, and more specifically the distinction between AmE *perfect* and BP *simple*, this study attempts to contribute to the debate about focus on form with an analysis of the effects of rule teaching and error correction using a husband—wife interaction.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### **Introduction to *Focus on Form***

Second language instruction has been somehow or another associated with modeling, implying that learners need to have access to linguistic data to acquire correct forms. Lightbown and Spada (2001) observe that a condition for second language learning is exposure to modified input. There are three types of modified input: positive evidence (real speech), explicit data (e.g. rule teaching), and negative evidence (e.g. immediate error correction) (Schwartz, 1993). Input modification represents an attempt to make the target language understandable and learnable. However, the nature of input and the way students interact with it have been subject of a continuing discussion in the field. Traditionally, instructors stressed rule teaching and error correction to develop writing and reading skills. With the creation of the Audio-lingual Method, while there was a new emphasis on fluency, it did not necessarily replace the old rule-centered view. Teaching became even more structured and concerned with error-hunting. With the advent of other fluency-focused methods such as Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), positive rather than negative input became salient. Therefore, grammar was defocused, allowing students to speak up despite errors and to have more uncontrolled interactions in the classroom.

While second language teaching has advanced tremendously since its initial focus on explicit grammar instruction and error correction, there is still a great deal of debate as to how instruction could facilitate L2 acquisition. Arguing that students “acquire” the language from being exposed to *comprehensible input* (not explicit rule teaching), Krashen became an important figure in SLA theory and practice, and his ideas have been very influential in CLT. Claims based on Krashen’s hypotheses have stressed naturalistic approaches where meaningful communicative activities are argued to be more effective in prompting L2 acquisition. However, Krashen has been strongly criticized for his neglect of the role of formal grammar instruction in adult SLA. Numerous studies of explicit learning have proposed new interpretations to focus on form, which do not exclude using the target language for communicative purposes but rather incorporate both form and meaning into form-focused instruction. Proponents of this new *focus on form* (also called FonF or FFI), while acknowledging the importance of understanding input for successful adult SLA, have argued that adult learners also need to consciously “notice” the forms that they are producing incorrectly so they can change them (Schmidt, 1983; Schmidt and Frota, 1986; Long and Robinson, 1998; DeKeyser, 1998; Doughty and Williams, 1998). Based on skill building theories such as Anderson’s (1993) Adaptive Control Theory (ACT), focus on form researchers compare SLA with the development of cognition (DeKeyser, 1998; Johnson 1996).

#### **Earlier ESL Teaching Methods**

The oldest ESL method is grammar-translation, which taught “correct” grammar rules and a wide literary vocabulary intended to develop students’ reading and writing ability. In addition to learning how to spot grammatical categories in a sentence through parsing, students had to copy

had to avoid surface errors such as spelling for fear of punishment or disdain. Such an emphasis on accuracy allowed little to no time for fluency, but proved relatively successful in teaching reading and writing in L1 contexts—a modern version of this method is English for Academic Purposes (EAP) courses in which students often develop reading skills without learning to speak the language. However, even in writing, the Grammar-Translation Method did not achieve universal success among students (Rivers, 1964). Rivers explains:

In an endeavor to practice the application of rules and the use of exceptional forms, the student is often trained in artificial forms of language, some of which are rare, some old-fashioned, many of little practical use. The language learned is mostly of a literary type, and the vocabulary is detailed and sometimes esoteric. The average student has to work hard at what he considers laborious and monotonous chores—vocabulary learning, translation, and endless written exercises—without much feeling of progress in the mastery of the language and with very little opportunity to express himself through it. (pp. 17-18)

When ESL instruction developed a concern with fluency after World War II, new methods had to be created. The Audio-lingual Method (ALM), resulting from a “marriage of structural linguistics and behaviorist psychology,” as Omaggio puts it, started off as the “Army Specialized Training Program” in the 1940’s and dominated academic programs in the US in the 1950’s and 1960’s, with the help of funds from the National Defense Education Act (Omaggio, 1986). Avoiding explicit grammar instruction (e.g. parsing and translation) and changing the focus from written to oral communication, ALM reinforced repetition, drilling, error correction, and structural syllabi (Rivers, 1968; Omaggio, 1986; Krashen and Terrell, 1983). As behaviorists claimed, learning occurs through imitation of correct models. They believed that if a structure (linguistic behavior) was practiced over and over through rote learning, it could be automatized. Following Skinner’s (1957) Verbal Learning theory, ALM emphasized behavior modification (error correction) and highly controlled instruction. Structures were taught from simple to complex ones, and production was minimal because teachers believed that students’ errors could contribute to the formation of bad habits. This “scientific” approach, advocated by Lado (1964), reached world-wide popularity and is still used in many schools around the globe. However, given its great emphasis on overlearning, the Audio-lingual Method tended to become boring and, to a certain degree, ineffective. Omaggio (1986) explains its decline:

The enthusiasm with which second language teachers had originally received this revolutionary methodology was dampened within a relatively short time. First, the method did not deliver what it had promised: bilingual speakers at the end of instruction. [...] Furthermore, both teachers and students found the avoidance of grammar discussions frustrating and time consuming. The continuous repetition required for overlearning and memorization was monotonous and was a considerable physical strain on both teachers and students. (p. 64)

Because ALM did not facilitate proficiency as claimed, most language schools, following advances in generative linguistics and cognitive psychology, have turned to alternative methods the most important of which is CLT.

### **Communicative Language Teaching**

CLT is currently being used in most ESL programs throughout the world. This method (or approach, as many prefer to call it), focusing on general linguistic ability, has integrated the language arts (reading, listening, and so forth) and incorporated other advances in linguistics and cognitive psychology into language instruction (e.g. Chomsky, 1965; Ausubel 1963).

Linguists beginning with Chomsky (1965) have argued convincingly that first language learning is creative rather than repetitive and based solely on positive evidence, not negative evidence. His studies of child language acquisition and *universal grammar* (UG), along with Lenneberg’s (1967) *critical period hypothesis* (where the ability to acquire a first language ends

at puberty), were strong evidence against Skinner's behaviorist theory. As discussed before, Skinner's theory emphasized negative evidence through imitation of correct models and immediate error correction to avoid the creation of bad habits. Chomsky argued that it would be a waste of time trying to teach children to speak when they are going to do so on their own. Biologist Lenneberg noted that this ability to learn languages is biological and age-related, like birds that do not learn to sing if they are not exposed to birdsong input. As these studies have shown, children are not like parrots, which can be trained to imitate speech. Children learn to speak creatively, regardless of error correction.

Other critics of the Audio-lingual Method, especially cognitive psychologist Ausubel (1963), following advances in linguistic theory, advocated the importance of meaningful learning over rote learning. Similar views by educational researchers such as Piaget and Inhelder (1969), Vygotsky (1962), and Rogers (1969) emphasized the role of social interaction, personal experience, and creativity in learning. All these studies laid the foundations for communicative language teaching. In this context Stephen Krashen (1985) developed his language acquisition theory. Krashen believes that second language acquisition can occur implicitly as long as the learner has access to comprehensible input (e.g. modified teacher talk) slightly beyond his or her competence. These ideas have been very influential in the field of SLA and have motivated teachers to focus more on fluency than on accuracy.

### **Krashen's Hypotheses**

Upon developing his five hypotheses of second language acquisition (Learning-Acquisition, Monitor, Natural Order, Input, and Affective Filter), Krashen states there is a basic principle for SLA: comprehensible input plus low affective filter. This filter refers to a construct which allows the learner to accept or reject affective influences. He contends that SLA can occur if learners have comprehensible input slightly beyond their acquired knowledge of the target language and provided that their affective filters are low enough, enabling them to take risks in conversations without being afraid or ashamed of making mistakes. He also argues that neither explicit grammar instruction nor negative evidence has any effect on adult L2.

Krashen's Monitor Theory (MT) interests us here because it is closely related to the role of negative evidence and explicit data. According to Krashen (1985), there are two ways of processing L2 input: *acquisition* and *learning*. Acquisition is the ability to internalize rules unconsciously through access to spontaneous speech. Learning refers to the ability to learn rules through access to formal grammar instruction and error correction. Krashen argues that learning about grammatical rules does not enable the L2 learner to acquire them; instead, the adult learner needs to be spoken to in ways that he can understand so that he can grow his syntax in a similar way as the child does in Chomsky's (1965) theory.

He backed up MT using three types of input for immigrant children in language immersion programs—teacher talk, foreigner talk, and interlanguage talk. Comparing such forms of input with L1 caretakers' interaction with children, he argues that all these speakers (1) provide structures in a relatively predictable order (natural order) and (2) adapt input ( $i + 1$ ) to the learner's level ( $i$ ). With simplified input, L1 as well as L2 children acquire the language unconsciously in communication because they are good risk-takers: i.e., their affective filter is low. Citing two studies (Butterworth, 1972; Huang, 1970) conducted in language immersion settings, Krashen (1982) argues that 13-year-old Ricardo, unlike five-year-old Paul, was not a successful acquirer due to lack of comprehensible input from both native speakers and ESL peers, not to the age difference. While he does not discuss whether Ricardo's failure would be

related to a possible higher affective filter, Krashen insists that if Ricardo had had access to enough comprehensible input, he would have acquired the L2.

Krashen's theory has motivated teachers to focus on meaning over form and provide more spontaneous speech in the classroom, which explains the creation of several immersion programs (e.g. sheltered learning programs) in which students can be exposed to a sizeable amount of input. Krashen argues that instruction does not make a difference to the learner's acquired grammatical knowledge. Although focus on form can help the speaker to monitor his or her grammar, it is natural input from peers and others that can lead to successful SLA.

### **Revisiting Krashen**

Other researchers have examined the role of affective filters and instruction in successful adult SLA. Schumman (1977) proposed an acculturation model in which social and psychological distance factors account for how well an individual beyond the critical period might attain SLA. He also argues that instruction does not make a difference. His subject, Alberto, a Mexican immigrant worker in the U.S., is an example of street learners who pidginize grammatical forms of the target language to fulfill basic communicative functions. For example, he uses the uniform negative "no + verb" for most utterances and does not invert in questions. His performance seems so fossilized that, even with instruction, there's no significant change in his spontaneous speech. Since Alberto's production improved only in highly monitored situations, Schumman concludes that "instruction is evidently not powerful enough to overcome pidginization" (p. 268).

Comparing foreigner talk, pidgins, and children's initial unmarked grammar, Schumman says that speakers like Alberto would share a basic language that is "expanded and complicated" and that is not a simplified code (quoting Corder, 1975). In that sense, Alberto's erratic competence would be the "product of cognitive constraints engendered by lack of knowledge of the target language", persisting due to social and psychological distance (p. 269). This study supports Krashen's theory that the affective filter inhibits adult SLA.

Studying child language acquisition, Wong-Fillmore (1979) observes that children are usually more concerned with communication, but some of them also focus on form. She finds that her subjects, five Spanish-speaking children acquiring English, vary in the way they seek interaction with native speakers. For instance, while Juan "rarely said anything in English unless he was quite sure of himself," Nora uninhibitedly attempted to communicate with native speakers and learned to use formulaic expressions to generate new utterances. Both had different concerns: Juan focused on form (though not so consciously perhaps), whereas Nora "was far more concerned with communication" (Wong-Fillmore, 1979, p. 224). Their distinct communication strategies (learning patterns of the target language first vs. taking risk/asking for help) account for rate differences. Wong-Fillmore observes that focusing on form inhibited Juan's acquisition, but she argues that both children will learn the language well, regardless of their distinct interactional styles. Commenting on Nora's more rapid acquisition, she leans in the direction of the acculturation model for child L2: "To learn a language more rapidly, it is perhaps most necessary to identify with the people who speak it" (Wong-Fillmore, 1979, 225).

Schmidt (1983) presents an alternative view to the acculturation model for adult L2. He defends formal instruction for successful adult SLA and argues that success does not depend upon those factors which eluded Alberto. Schmidt says that his subject, Wes, does not have a productive grasp of the language features surrounding him because he's not concerned with form; he's interested in communication only. Wes is an artist who immigrated to Hawaii three

years prior to the study. He had little formal instruction in English, but he developed an unusual, yet erratic, fluency in the language. Unlike Alberto, Wes is well integrated in the U.S. and seems to have acquired a higher status in communication for he is a successful “negotiator of meaning,” as Schmidt puts it, and he can appropriate a number of strategies to get his messages across. However, while he might be considered as a successful negotiator of meaning, his lack of interest in developing grammatical competence makes him less successful in sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competence. His limited communication strategies contrast with a reinforced stress on interaction, which requires a great level of collaboration from native speakers. As Schmidt points out, “[native speakers] must rely on the nonverbal context not only to decipher the ambiguities of his grammatical system but also to discover the illocutionary force of his communicative messages” (Schmidt, 1983, p. 156). An example is his use of time adverbials “to compensate for an almost total lack of a tense system in English” (Schmidt, 1983, p. 163). In addition, Wes seems to neglect native help with grammar and vocabulary and, unlike children such as Nora, who learn formulas creatively, he sticks to formulaic expressions for his immediate needs. He doesn’t use them to create new sentences.

In the sense that both lacked morphological features and had no significant formal instruction in English, Wes resembles Alberto. Both seem to speak a pidginized form of English which helps them carry out their everyday conversations, but fail at pragmatic competence. Wes is aware of that lack and tries to reinforce his utterances with additional lexical items (e.g. overusing “please” for politeness). With the analysis of Wes’ incomplete competence, Schmidt questions Schumman’s acculturation model and proposes non-awareness of form as the explanation for Wes’ failure. While Schumman says Alberto didn’t succeed due to social and psychological distance factors, Schmidt argues Wes was well integrated and motivated, thereby contradicting the acculturation model.

Wes’ inability to focus on form differs from the approaches of Julie, Ioup et al.’s (1994) subject, an untutored English speaker living in Egypt who acquired native-like fluency in Arabic. While Wes only focuses on interaction, Julie is interested in developing both linguistic and communicative competence. And she does attend to form (e.g. using a notebook to take grammar notes and constantly asking native speakers questions about Arabic). To explain Julie’s native-like attainment, Ioup et al. compare her performance with that of Laura, an American who had achieved a similar proficiency level via instruction. Each had a different input, Julie’s being solely conversational while Laura’s was a combination of communication and instruction. Assessed in quality of speech production, ability to recognize accents and knowledge of syntactic rules, both approximate native speakers; however, Julie’s performance is slightly superior. For example, Julie outperforms Laura in the use of discourse markers and recognition of foreign accents, but she has some difficulty keeping track of noun phrases in relative clauses, unlike Laura.

With a further look at Wes’ and Julie’s approach to form, Ioup et al. argue that attention to form alone does not guarantee native-like proficiency (p. 92). Therefore, there is an additional factor accounting for Julies’s success: talent in learning languages. The authors define talent as an innate capacity “associated with unusual brain organization where a great proportion of the brain is devoted to language” and “inherited characteristics belonging to the Geschwind cluster such as left-handedness, twinning, and allergies” (p. 92). This capacity “allows the learner to be more cognitively flexible in processing L2 input and ultimately organizing it into a system” (Ioup et al., 1994, p. 92). Julie matches the Geschwind cluster in terms of her superior associative memory and premature speed in L1 acquisition.

That explains why Wes didn't succeed. Although he couldn't ever achieve a level similar to Julie's without talent, he could have become a more proficient speaker if he had attended to the grammatical features present in his conversations with native speakers.

### **Other Reactions to Krashen**

Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991) argue that Krashen doesn't recognize, unlike Schumman, that Wes was an exception for their theories (acculturation model and monitor model). Given that Wes had a great amount of comprehensible input and a considerably lower filter, he should have succeeded in acquiring English. But Krashen, based on Schmidt, argues that "Wes' motivation to go to Hawaii was only in a small way integrative" (p. 248).

White (1987) criticizes Krashen for four reasons: (1) he doesn't recognize that certain aspects of the learner's grammatical development are internally driven, independent from context; (2) he overestimates the role and benefits of simplified input; (3) he doesn't clarify what input is relevant for the next stage; and (4) he doesn't account for the importance of negative evidence. White suggests that it is not only context that is necessary for learners to understand messages and internalize rules. In "John was hit" learners might filter out "was" and understand "John hit" which wouldn't occur if they had acquired the verb "hit" and its transitivity. What the learner needs here is linguistic knowledge, which can be provided without context. On another matter, White argues that learners acquiring the third person singular, for instance, will not just count on a natural order of acquisition if they don't have negative feedback to distinguish *Mary eat an apple* from *Mary eats an apple* since both utterances have the same meaning. Another example is the omission of pronouns such as in Spanish "(ella) anda muy ocupada" / *she is very busy*. Because "there's no obvious comprehensible input that can show this [difference]" (p. 106), speakers of Spanish learning English must notice that "she" is required. White's most famous example refers to the question of adverb placement in French and English as in *Jean a bu lentement son café*/\* "John drank slowly his coffee." As she argues, a native speaker of French, provided with input allowing a relatively free placement of the adverb in the sentence, will not know when that restriction applies unless he or she has access to explicit data or negative evidence. In sum, White implies that both contextual input and conscious attention to form are necessary for successful SLA.

### **Against Explicit Data and Negative Evidence**

Schwartz (1993), however, suggests that explicit data and negative evidence have no effect upon competence (success) but do affect performance. Rejecting White's (1987, 1991) treatment of adverb placement and basing her own discussion on Fodor's (1983) argument that language is modular, she argues that syntax can only be acquired while the lexicon can be learned. As Schwartz explains, Fodor's theory maintains that the brain processes outside stimuli through modules. There is a language module, a vision module, and so forth. Once information is captured through, say, our eyes or ears, it is then restored in a central processing system. The central processing system does not have access to the information itself but to its "translation" through each module. As Schwartz illustrates, each module is like a transformer that changes the stimuli in ways that the brain can process. Each module operates within its modularity constraints, just like one is not able to *see* if not through the eyes. Therefore, the language module can only process *language*. Metalinguistic information about a sentence cannot be processed by the language module. As Schwartz puts it, "It is only [positive evidence] that can drive UG in L2A" (p. 153). Therefore, learning rules regarding adverb placement is not

sufficient to enable the French speaker to acquire them. There must be some built-in UG-related mechanism that forces the brain to interpret only “the big picture” through positive input, but not “isolated linguistic facts” through explicit data or negative evidence.

According to Schwartz, SLA should focus, not on isolated linguistic facts, but on the whole picture. Though provoking a renewed interest in Krashen’s theory, especially the idea of stressing positive evidence to promote L2 acquisition, Schwartz has also recognized that focus on form can be useful. As she points out, focus on form does not effect competence but learned linguistic knowledge. Focus on form “may, nevertheless, affect linguistic behavior, and sometimes that may be all we are seeking” (p. 160).

### **Noticing the Gap**

One study (Schmidt and Frota, 1986) has been consistently cited in focus on form research. Schmidt and Frota coined the term “notice the gap” in a study of Schmidt’s (R’s) acquisition of Portuguese during R’s five-month stay in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Focusing the analysis on 14 verbal constructions in Portuguese and investigating the effects of instruction and conversational interaction on learning, the authors analyze three generalizations and how each fits into the data. R learned and used what he was taught if the form was

- ◇ taught early in class and highly drilled.
- ◇ taught and subsequently heard in input.
- ◇ taught and subsequently heard and *noticed*.

There are exceptions to all generalizations, but the authors state that the third one fits best into the data. Three structures interest us most here: the progressive (ESTAR + V-ndo), present perfect (TER + participle), and pluperfect (TER + participle) because they are exceptions to the third generalization and because they are more closely related to our study. The progressive was “taught early, drilled often, is highly regular, and was topically relevant” (p. 279), but it had a low frequency in R’s speech. Neither did R use the present perfect (e.g. *tenho falado* | [I] have spoken) nor the pluperfect (e.g. *tinha falado* | [I] had spoken),<sup>1</sup> which were also highly drilled but seldom present in input. The authors explain R’s difficulty with the progressive:

One possible reason for R’s nonuse of this “easy” form may be the fact that the progressive is commonly used in Portuguese in utterances in which it is unlikely, or in a few cases (with statives) not permissible in English. (Schmidt and Frota, 1986, p. 279)

With regards to the present perfect and pluperfect, Schmidt and Frota observe that R did not notice them although they were occasionally present in input. In one of his journal entries, R described a trip to Trattoria with M, a native speaker. R wanted to ask if M had been going to the city for a long time. So, he attempted a perfect form, “Há muito tempo você inha vido á Trattoria?” [Have you been going to Trattoria long?]. When M replied, “vou lá há muito tempo” [“I go there it’s a long time”], R thought M had spoken back in foreigner talk. As the authors further explain, “The native speaker’s response was not foreigner talk at all, but a correction. R attempted a past perfect, apparently thinking it was a compound present [present perfect], in an environment in which the present perfect is required in English but its closest equivalent is prohibited in Portuguese” (Schmidt and Frota, 1986, pp. 280, 321-2). The results regarding the progressive and perfect show that positive evidence was not sufficient in helping R to acquire the semantics of these structures in BP.

The authors observe that instruction helped the learner to “hear” (notice) forms from input; however, it did not guarantee grammaticality. Interaction also helped but it did not guarantee idiomaticity. Error correction helped little: self-correction had no effect; some corrections from native speakers worked while others did not.



Schmidt and Frota finally theorize that what does help the learner to acquire L2 forms is one's ability to "notice the gap." They write,

While Krashen proposes that both the product and the processes of acquisition are subconscious, and specifically the that differences between competing forms  $i$  and  $i+1$  are noticed at a subconscious level..., we propose instead that in the particular case of a nontargetlike form  $i$  and a targetlike form  $i+1$  a second language learner will begin to acquire the targetlike form if and only if it is present in comprehended input and "noticed" in the normal sense of the word, that is, consciously (Schmidt and Frota, 1986, p. 310).

They continue:

One of the advantages of a conscious notice the gap principle is that it provides a way to include a role for correction, and instruction in general, in an integrated theory of second language learning (Schmidt and Frota, 1986, p. 311).

Their argument is in line with studies in SLA motivated by cognitive psychology, and specifically the role of attention in learning.

### **The Role of Attention**

Focus on form researchers such as DeKeyser (1998), Ellis (2001), and Long (2001) see a close connection between second language acquisition and the development of general cognition. Part of their evidence comes from studies in cognitive psychology. A learning theory often quoted in their studies is Anderson's ACT Model, which divides cognitive skill into three processes: 1) declarative knowledge; 2) proceduralization of knowledge; and 3) automatizing or fine-tuning procedural knowledge (qtd. in DeKeyser, 1998). DeKeyser (1998) illustrates ACT with the case of

...the foreign language teacher who is fluent in the target language, having spoken it daily for many years, but still remembers the rules, because he or she teaches them to students. The teacher's friends, however, who took the same language courses and also used the language for many years, but whose professions have nothing to do with the language, have proceduralized their knowledge but lost its declarative form. (p. 49)

In other words, after being taught the rules of a given form (declarative knowledge), the learner might be able to practice it over and over (procedural knowledge) until he or she produces the form naturally without thinking about the rules (automatizing knowledge). "The crucial point," DeKeyser continues, "is not whether one eventually loses declarative knowledge, but how one moves from exclusively declarative knowledge to at least procedural knowledge" (op. cit.).

Another theory that interacts with ACT is Bandura's (1977) Social Learning Theory. Bandura says that learning occurs through 1) observation; 2) retention; 3) reproduction; and 4) motivation. As Bandura (1977) states, "Learning would be exceedingly laborious, not to mention hazardous, if people had to rely solely on the effects of their own actions to inform them what to do. Fortunately, most human behavior is learned observationally through modeling: from observing others one forms an idea of how new behaviors are performed, and on later occasions this coded information serves as a guide for action" (qtd. in tip.psychology.org). Although Bandura is not concerned with second language acquisition, his emphasis on observation suggests modeling linguistic behavior as an important component for language development.

Both theories echo behaviorist claims that accuracy comes with modeling and practice. According to tip.psychology.org, "Bandura's model has been applied to the understanding of aggression and psychological disorders, particularly in the context of behavior modification." Anderson's declarative knowledge implies modeling explicit data while proceduralization of knowledge also stresses the importance of practice. This sounds a bit too behavioristic to be applied to language learning, given the negative connotation of that school of thought and, more importantly, all the evidence against it as discussed before. However, in recent years many

researchers have turned to the commonsensical belief behind general cognitive learning that to acquire a given skill (e.g. swimming) individuals need to observe others performing the action and then try it out on their own until they can do it correctly. In the context of second language instruction, these theories interact within the following paradigm:

- ◇ The learner must be able to notice the form being taught.
- ◇ The learner must remember the form in order to use it.
- ◇ The learner must reproduce the form so it can become automatic.
- ◇ The learner must be motivated to continue his attention.

For instance, to learn the present perfect adult acquirers need to see the distinction between this form and others (e.g. have written / wrote / write / am writing). They also need to remember irregular participles (e.g. spoken / run / taken). In addition, they must reproduce the forms enough times: e.g. drilling contractions might not necessary mean practicing them in real speech. Finally, the learner must feel motivated to continue learning. Because adults need to attend to form, they can decide not to engage in learning events if they do not want to: e.g. a speaker might give up using the present perfect if he/she realizes that it is not worth the effort. Although focus on form echoes the behaviorist claims previously discussed, this renewed interest in form is distinct from earlier approaches to second language instruction.

### **Focus on Forms vs. Focus on Form**

Given its stress on grammar, focus on form might be similar to other form-focused approaches such as grammar-translation and audio-lingual methods. However, focus on form takes in the advantages of comprehensible input. Instead of teaching structures per se in structurally-conceived syllabi through discussion of rules and exceptions, as in the Grammar-Translation Method, or through drilling of isolated linguistic items, as in ALM, focus on form suggests (a) implicit references to form, (b) noticing, and (c) embedding grammar with communicative activities (Brown 2000), where the main focus is on meaning and communication. Long (2001) thus distinguishes focus on *forms* from focus on *form*:

As distinct from a focus on *form*..., the structural syllabi, ALM, and variants thereof involve a focus on *forms*. That is to say, the content of the syllabus and of lessons based on it is the linguistic items themselves (structures, notions, lexical items, etc.); a lesson is designed to teach “the past continuous”, “requesting” and so on, nothing else (Long 2001, p. 183).

Long further proposes a rationale for focus on form:

Whereas the content of lessons with a focus on *forms* is the *forms* themselves, a syllabus with a focus on *form* teaches something else—biology, mathematics, workshop practice, automobile repair, the geography of a country where the foreign language is spoken, the cultures of its speakers, and so on—and overtly draws students’ attention to linguistic elements as they arise incidentally in lessons whose overriding focus is on meaning, or communication (Long 2001: 184).

This focus on communication is associated with what Long (1985) calls *the interaction hypothesis*. According to Long, comprehensible input alone is not sufficient for second language acquisition. In conversations with native speakers or more advanced learners, what makes a difference for the L2 learner is not just having access to simplified input, but participating actively in the interaction. From getting involved in communicative tasks, the non-native speaker makes input comprehensible or *meaningful*, to use Ausubel’s term. He or she learns to take turns, to ask for clarification, to paraphrase, to slow down—to *modify* his or her speech (Lightbown and Spada, 2000). This process of input modification is crucial for second language acquisition. Although all kinds of interaction, including interactions among native speakers themselves, involve some type of input modification to avoid potential ambiguity, the novice learner needs to have more access to metatalk in order to learn the target forms. As Long argues,

to better reap benefits from metatalk and other types of modified interactions, L2 learners also need to develop metalinguistic awareness, which is the second main purpose of focus on form.

### **Focus on Form and L1 Interference**

Focus on form also has a concern with the learner's first language. According to Doughty and Williams (1998, p. 226), "a learner's previous linguistic knowledge influences the acquisition of a new language in a principled, if not straightforward, contrastive way." They briefly review the literature to highlight the importance of L1 interference to focus on form. Citing Selinker and Lakshmanan (1992), they argue that L1 interference has a privileged status among a number of factors affecting SLA. For example, in the case of L1 French/L2 English adverb placement, White (1991) argues that "explicit and negative evidence may be required, or at least helpful" to override the influence of the L1 (Doughty and Williams 1998, p. 226). Another study (Ringbom 1990) comparing Swedish and Finnish learners of English showed that L1 forms may influence learners' perception of L2 forms. As Doughty and Williams explain, "Swedish contains articles, whereas Finnish does not, and therefore, [...] Swedish learners are more likely to notice this relatively nonsalient feature of English."

This is not to say that second language learners' errors are bi-lateral. Lightbown and Spada (2000) illustrate that with a comparison between French learners of English and English learners of French regarding object pronoun placement. The authors state that, unlike Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (CAH) predictions that a word-order error such as in "Le chien mange *le*" and "the dog *it* eats" might occur, "English speakers learning French are more likely to make the predicted error than French speakers learning English" because these learners make different assumptions about the target language (p. 73). English speakers might assume that the frequently heard SVO structure in French also applies to object pronouns. French speakers, however, will not find occurrences of SOV for object pronouns in English and, therefore, will not have trouble using the correct form (Lightbown and Spada, op. cit.).

However relevant, L1 interference is not a determining factor in students' performance in the target language. As Lightbown and Spada put it, "not all errors made by second language learners can be explained in terms of first language transfer. A number of studies have shown that many errors can be better explained as learners' attempts to discover the structure of the language being learned rather than an attempt to transfer patterns of their first language" (p. 72).

Nevertheless, L1 semantics does play an important role in students' production of new sentences in the target languages, especially those students who haven't been exposed to enough input. Two studies (De Paula Scott, 1995; Bond, 2001) shed new light on this matter with regards to the present perfect. De Paula Scott conducted a contrastive analysis of the interlanguage of Mexican learners of Brazilian Portuguese and found that the existence of equivalent structures in the L2 make the learner think that those structures have the same meaning and use as in the L1, causing the learner to make tense-choice errors. Such is the confusion with Sp *siempre* / BP *sempre* ("always") and Sp *nunca* / BP *nunca* ("never") with either present perfect or simple past (De Paula Scott, op. cit., p. 45). In the following sentences both structures are possible in Spanish (3, 4) and Portuguese (5,6):

- (3) Siempre viajé en tren. Sp  
Always traveled(1sg) in train  
"I always traveled by train."
- (4) Siempre he viajado en tren. Sp  
Always have(1sg) traveled in train

- “I have always traveled by train.”
- (5) Sempre viajei de trem. BP  
Always traveled(1sg) of train  
“I have always traveled by train.”
- (6) Sempre tenho viajado de trem. BP  
Always have(1sg) traveled of train  
“I have always been traveling by train.”

As De Paula Scott discusses, Mexican speakers who receive input showing the grammaticality of a Portuguese sentence in the perfect (6), a structure similar to the present perfect in Mexican Spanish (4), have difficulty finding where the structure is not possible as in (10):

- (7) \*Chico Buarque nunca cantó en Mexico. Sp  
Chico Buarque never sang(3sg) in Mexico  
“Chico Buarque never sang in Mexico.”
- (8) Chico Buarque nunca ha cantado en Mexico. Sp  
Chico Buarque never has(3sg) sung in Mexico  
“Chico Buarque has never sung in Mexico.”
- (9) Chico Buarque nunca cantou no México. BP  
Chico Buarque never sang(3sg) in-the Mexico  
“Chico Buarque has never sung in Mexico.”
- (10) \*Chico Buarque nunca tem cantado no México. BP  
Chico Buarque never has(1sg) sung in-the Mexico  
“Chico Buarque has never sung in Mexico.”

De Paula Scott argues that (7) is ungrammatical if the speaker means that Chico Buarque might still sing in Mexico. In Portuguese, (9) is the only correct option. Her study highlights the influence of modifiers such as “sempre” and “nunca” in establishing aspect boundaries. She suggests that to succeed in acquiring the perfect in Brazilian Portuguese, Mexican students need to have access to this type of metalinguistic information in cases where they cannot receive enough evidence from input. While finding the semantic differences between two perfect structures might be challenging, adverbs and other modifiers provide the learner with more salient cues to interpret sentences in the L2.

Bond (2001), who studied L1 interference regarding Brazilian usage of the present perfect in English, also emphasizes the importance of adverbials. She conducted a small-scale classroom survey requiring students to translate sentences from Portuguese into English and found that the present perfect may offer a substantial difficulty for Brazilians because its closest equivalent in Portuguese has a distinct semantics. Quoting Santos (1996), she argues that there is a distinction between the description of two parallel structures in two languages and the use of the same structures in those languages. As she puts it, “The present perfect cannot be simply translated into Portuguese, and a whole host of aspects and adverbials are used instead, which can lead to significant L1 interference.” Because Portuguese offers a variety of forms corresponding to the perfect, students often have trouble understanding and using the perfect correctly. Her study shows the relevance of highlighting adverbs and other cues or even translating sentences into Portuguese to make learning the perfect less challenging for Brazilian speakers. For example, she found that most students in her study had trouble identifying a past event with a present result, but had no problem with sentences using “recently.”

Instead of doing contrastive analysis on the perfect, this study attempts to find the same kind of explanation as Lightbown and Spada do for word order errors. The following two chapters will focus on L1 Portuguese/L2 English perfect forms in order to discover the semantic differences that Schmidt and Frota (1986) mentioned only briefly.

### **End Notes**

1. Schmidt and Frota say *compound present tense* and *compound past perfect*.

### CHAPTER 3

#### THE PERFECT ASPECT: SYNTACTIC AND SEMANTIC DIFFERENCES BETWEEN BRAZILIAN PORTUGUESE AND ENGLISH

As Swan (1995) notes, the English present perfect is used rather differently than most comparable structures in other languages (e.g. Eng *I have worked*, Fr *J'ai travaillé*, Germ *Ich habe gearbeitet*, It *Ho lavorato*, Sp *He trabajado*, BP *Tenho trabalhado*.) The summary below, adapted from his *Practical English Grammar*, explains the use of the perfect in British and American English today.

◇ finished events connected with the present

*I've broken my leg.* (My leg is broken now.)

◇ finished events: news

*There has been an accident.*

◇ finished events with expression of “time up to now”

*Have you ever seen a ghost?*

◇ repetition and continuation to now

*I've studied hard for years.*

Generally speaking, American English differs from British English in the following contexts:

◇ Simple past used for news: AmE *Lucy just called.* | BrE *Lucy has (just) called.*

◇ Simple past + indefinite past-time adverb (e.g. ever, already, yet, before): AmE *Did you eat already?* | BrE *Have you already eaten?*

The distinction between the present perfect and other forms (e.g. simple present and simple past) can elucidate the semantics of this structure in English. Swan argues that “the choice between simple present perfect and simple past does not depend on whether we are talking about *finished actions*, as learners’ grammars sometimes suggest (though it has a lot do with whether we are talking about *finished time periods*)” (p. 423). Bardovi-Harlig (1997) identifies three distinctions between the present perfect and the simple past (table 1).

Table 1 - Semantic Features

Feature	Present Pefect	Simple Past	Simple Present
Current relevance	+	-	+
Anterior	+	+	-
Sequential	-	+	+

Citing Suh (1992), she states that “the present perfect and the simple past share the feature [+anterior], but differ on the feature [current relevance] with the present perfect carrying [+current relevance] and the simple past [-current relevance]” (p. 221). Another distinction,

according to Bardovi-Harlig, is that the present perfect, unlike the simple past, cannot be used to communicate events sequentially, i.e. in a chronological order, thereby carrying the feature [-sequential]. As for the distinction between the present perfect and present simple, she says that the simple present holds [+current relevance] together with [-anterior].<sup>1</sup> Bardovi-Harlig does not discuss whether the simple present can be used in chronological order, thereby holding [+sequential] as in the *historic present* (Greenbaun and Quirk, 1990).

With regards to the distinction between the present perfect and its equivalent forms/meanings in Brazilian Portuguese, the following examples (adapted from Thomas, 1969) show how the English perfect simple or progressive can be translated:

### 1. BP Simple Present vs. AmE Present Perfect

◇ To express past action continuing into the present, with various verbal and adverbial expressions of time such as *há/faz/tem (que)*, *desde (que)*, and *depois (que, de)*

- (11) Estamos aqui já faz três dias.  
(We)are(2pl) here already makes three days  
“We’ve already been here three days.”
- (12) Ele mora ali desde o ano passado.  
He lives there since the year past  
“He has lived there since last year.”
- (13) Depois do Natal não vejo mais ele.  
After of-the Christmas not see(1sg) more he  
“Since Christmas I haven’t seen him again.”

◇ After *a primeira vez que* (the first time)

- (14) É a primeira vez que danço salsa.  
(It)is the first time that (I)dance(1sg) salsa  
“It’s the first time I’ve ever danced salsa.”

### 2. BP Simple Past vs. AmE Present Perfect

◇ To express past action or condition complete at the present

- (15) Ela já acabou o trabalho.  
She already finished the work  
“She has finished her work.”
- (16) Você já foi à Bahia?  
You ever went to-the Bahia  
“Have you ever been to Bahia?”

### 3. BP Present Perfect vs. AmE Present Perfect<sup>2</sup>

◇ State begun in the past and continued up to the present

- (17) Tem feito calor ultimamente.  
(It)has done heat lately  
“It has been hot lately.”

◇ Action begun in the past and continued up to the present

- (18) O que você tem estudado na faculdade?  
The-what you have studied in-the college  
“What have you been studying at college?”

◇ Action repeated indefinitely, up to the present moment

- (19) Ele tem vindo à cidade com frequência.  
He has come to-the city with frequency  
“He has come downtown frequently.”

Two studies (Costa, 1997; Schmitt, 2001) can elucidate the distinction between BP and AmE with respect to the perfect. Costa identifies two features describing the perfect in Portuguese: *iteration* and *duration* (p. 47). Iteration refers to various events repeated one after the other. Duration refers to a single event that continues into the present.

◇ Iteration

- (20) Muitos estrangeiros têm vindo aqui.  
Many foreigners have come here  
“Many foreigners have come here.”

◇ Duration

- (21) Você sabe que eu tenho mantido o regime até hoje.  
You know that I have kept the diet until today  
“You know that I’ve kept the diet until today.”

However, as Costa points out, sometimes these features can be ambiguous:<sup>3</sup>

- (22) Nestes últimos anos, tenho tido muito sucesso.  
In-these last years have(1sg) had a-lot-of success  
“In the last few years I have had a lot of success.”

Schmitt did a cross-linguistic analysis of the perfect in the context of L1 acquisition. Schmitt argues that, unlike Spanish (23), in which the present tense indicates a momentary action similar to “He is singing right now”, both Portuguese (24) and English (25) present simple indicate a state:

- (23) Pedro canta (en este momento). Sp  
(24) O Pedro canta (\*neste momento). BP  
(25) Peter sings (\*right now). E

The perfect in Portuguese, however, forces an iterative reading as in (27), which means that “Pedro has engaged in many smoking events” (p. 441) while in (26) he is understood to be a heavy smoker.

- (26) Pedro fuma muito.  
Pedro smokes a-lot  
“Pedro smokes a lot.”  
(27) Pedro tem fumado muito.  
Pedro has smoked a-lot  
“Pedro has been smoking a lot.”

Schmitt argues that this difference becomes more salient with stative verbs such as *know*. As she explains, in (29) “we are not asserting that Claudia knows French [as in 28] but that there are many events of her showing knowledge of French, which requires a special context, for instance, a context in which we are surprised at her good grades in French” (p. 441).

- (28) A Cláudia sabe francês.  
The Claudia knows French.  
“Claudia knows French.”  
(29) A Cláudia tem sabido francês  
The Claudia has known French.  
“Claudia has known French.”

Unlike Portuguese, English does not support an iterative reading for the perfect. The difference between the simple present and present perfect in English can be explained in terms of time reference, but the meaning of the verb remains pretty much the same.

Schmitt concludes:



Present Tense morphology in Portuguese selects for states, and [...] this explains why only in the Present is the Perfect forced into an iterative reading. Since the Present in English also selects for states, but the Present Perfect in English does not force iteration, the differences between the Perfect in Portuguese and in English follow from the fact that the Perfect in Portuguese is not stative, unlike the Perfect in English. (p. 449)

Because the perfect in English does not correspond to the Portuguese equivalent in most of the cases, Brazilian speakers have to make use of a number of structures that can translate this form into Portuguese. On his website for students and teachers of English, Schutz (2004) describes this problem:

A maioria das idéias representadas pelo perfect tense em inglês correspondem curiosamente em português a combinações de certos advérbios, preposições, cláusulas adverbiais com verbos, ou a verbos compostos com o verbo principal no Presente, no Passado, no Gerúndio ou no Infinitivo.

[Most of the ideas expressed by the perfect tense in English correspond in Portuguese, oddly enough, with a combination of certain adverbs, prepositions, adverbial clauses with verbs, or with verb phrases whose main verb is in the present, past, progressive, or infinitive.]

Regarding BP diversity of forms, Schutz lists the following structures:

- ◇ *Imperfect Preterite*  
Onde é que você andava? - Where have you been?
- ◇ *Preterite*  
Eles se mudaram para um apartamento novo. - They have moved into a new apartment.  
O menino quebrou uma janela. - The boy has broken a window.
- ◇ *Recém + Preterite*  
O inverno recém começou. - Winter has just begun.  
Ele recém ligou. - He's just called me.
- ◇ *Já + Preterite*  
Já viajei de avião muitas vezes. - I have traveled by airplane many times.  
Você já visitou o México? - Have you ever visited Mexico?
- ◇ *Nunca + Preterite:*  
Nunca estive na África. - I have never been to Africa.  
Você nunca fumou maconha? - Haven't you ever smoked marihuana?
- ◇ *Ainda não + Preterite:*  
O médico ainda não chegou. - The doctor hasn't arrived yet.
- ◇ *Sempre + Preterite*  
Eu sempre estudei muito. - I have always studied hard.
- ◇ *Acabou (acaba) de + Infinitive*  
Ele acabou (acaba) de chegar. - He has just arrived.  
O menino acabou (acaba) de quebrar uma janela. - The boy has just broken a window.
- ◇ *Ter + past participle or andar/vir + gerund*  
O tempo tem estado bom. - The weather has been nice.  
Ultimamente, tenho estudado (ando/venho estudando) muito. - I have been studying English a lot recently.
- ◇ *Desde + Present:*  
Moro em Santa Cruz desde que nasci. - I have lived in Santa Cruz since I was born.  
Estou esperando aqui desde as 7 horas. - I have been waiting here since 7 o'clock.
- ◇ *Há (faz) + Present*  
Há (faz) mais de 30 anos que eles moram na mesma casa. - They have been living in the same house for over 30 years.  
Eu o conheço há (faz) muitos anos. - I have known him for many years.

Schutz continues his analysis of the perfect with a suggestion to students:

Embora o perfect tense não seja um tempo de verbo imprescindível para expressar-se (especialmente no inglês norte-americano), ele ocorre com muita frequência e imprime uma característica marcante no inglês. O uso correto do perfect tense confere maior elegância, tanto no ato de falar como no de escrever.

*[Although the perfect is not a mandatory tense for one's expression (especially in AmE), it occurs frequently and denotes a remarkable characteristic in English. Its correct use lends greater elegance not only to speech but also writing.]*

The “elegance” can be better interpreted as a necessity to express the perfect aspect with a present perfect form because the present perfect is still productive in English despite its current trend towards the simple past, as will be discussed in chapter 4.

### **End Notes**

1. In this study, the feature [anterior] will be used as a synonym for *finished* or *completed*. This question will be discussed in more detail in chapter 4.
2. In most contexts, the Portuguese present perfect is best translated by the English present perfect progressive. However, this study will not focus on the perfect progressive because, as Bardovi-Hallig (1997) suggests, this form only emerges after the present perfect has become robust.
3. Because of the ambiguity involving *duration* and *iteration*, this study has opted for *iteration*, which is a more general term to describe the Portuguese perfect form.

## CHAPTER 4

### THE PERFECT ASPECT: DIVERGING DEVELOPMENT FROM A COMMON SOURCE

The present perfect refers to events that, although started and finished in the past (therefore *perfect*), are semantically connected with the present. Such a connection (known as the “perfective” or “permansive” aspect) has been described in terms of the present results or current relevance of a past event to the moment of utterance, when the event is actually communicated to another interlocutor. To express the permansive aspect Indo-European languages have historically shifted from synthetic to analytic or even expanded patterns. Synthetic patterns include Latin *scripsi* | “I have written”, with a single inflected verb, whereas analytic ones are characterized by the use of a compound phrase with an auxiliary verb (derived from Latin *habere* or *tenere*) plus the past participle of a main verb (e.g. AmE *She has written* | BP *Ela tem escrito*). Finally, expanded patterns refer to other forms of representing the permansive aspect that surpass the verb structure (a good example is AmE *I just wrote a letter* in which the aspect is expressed by the adverb “just”). Although there seems to be a trend towards the use of expanded patterns in the language, English has stuck to the analytic perfect (have + participle) as its major way to communicate the permansive aspect. However, the same phenomenon did not occur in Portuguese, in which expanded patterns are quite productive.

The perfect has been traditionally described in terms of the **present result** of an action that took place in the past, as in “He’s lost his keys” (present result = he does not have his keys now).<sup>1</sup> Väänänen (1963, p. 139) states, “Le parfait designe proprement le resultat present d’un acte qui s’est deroulé dans un passé immediat ou ancien” [*the perfect designates the present result of an action that occurred in the immediate or ancient past*]. Jordan and Manoliu (1972, p. 321), who explain the use of the perfect in Latin, also share this idea:

El perfecto era el presente del aspecto perfectivo e indicaba que el momento final de la acción coincidía con el momento del habla, o que los resultados de la acción persistían en el momento de la oración (en cualquiera de estos casos la acción se había cumplido en un momento anterior al acto de habla).

[*The perfect was the present of the perfective aspect and meant that the final moment of the action matched the moment of speaking, or that the results of the action continued into the time of utterance (in each of these cases, the action would have been completed in a moment prior to the utterance)*].

On the other hand, Palmer (1968) refuses the explanation of the perfect as a present result. For him it would make more sense to think of a *current relevance*. The idea of result is misleading according to the author, unless we consider including “nil results” such as in “I’ve written but they haven’t replied” – and that is valid for the past perfect as well. As illustrations, he assumes that “I’ve finished my homework” and “I’ve bought a new suit” are relevant to the situation when such sentences are produced: in the first a child might ask to go play and, in the second, the suit is probably being displayed (p. 73). Other examples would be the following, with comments by the author:

I’ve cut my finger. (It’s still bleeding.)

They’ve fallen in the river. (They need help *or* their clothes are wet.)

You’ve had an accident. (I can see the bruises.) (p. 75)

McCoard (1978) expands Palmer's notion of current relevance into four different types:

- (i) *current relevance (CR)* – present state resulting from past action.
- (ii) *indefinite past (ID)* – past event unidentified as to time.
- (iii) *extended now (NX)* – past event within a time span which is continuous with the present (not differentiated into “then” vs. “now.”)
- (iv) *embedded past (EB)* – made up of a past-tense sentence embedded as sequential subject of a present-time predicate.

*Current relevance* seems to be the most useful to the comprehension of the perfect in English. Engel and Ritz (2000) comment briefly about McCoard's classification, in a study of the Australian variety of the perfect. They argue that current relevance has “led to more precise semantic representations in recent years” (p. 120).

### **Historical shift**

The expression of the perfect in today's Germanic and Romance languages such as American English and Brazilian Portuguese can be traced back to Indo-European synthetic patterns and aspects. This historical view, focused on specific forms related to the perfect (e.g. past participle), can elucidate semantic connections between AmE and BP and allow a richer analysis of the SLA problem.

According to Jespersen (1958), our Indo-European languages initially had no real forms in their verbs for tense-distinction, but instead indicated various aspects (perfective, imperfective, punctual, durative, inceptive, or others) (p. 286). Out of these distinctions, the author points out, gradually evolved the tense-systems which were found in the oldest Indo-European languages and which are the foundation of the systems existing today. Quoting Sarauw, Jespersen stated that the Indo-European perfect was at first an intensive or “permansive” present. Therefore, *kektemai* (I possess) and *heimai* (I wear) could probably be understood as “he who possesses has acquired” and “he who wears a garment has put it on” by inference (p. 269). This system has gone through great change in Germanic languages. Jespersen explains: “...what were perfects in the Gothonic [Germanic] languages have lost the present-element and have become pure preterits, as in E. *drove, sang, held* etc. To express perfect-meaning compounds with have were then formed: *I have driven, sung, held* etc” (p. 269).

With respect to Latin and Romance perfects, Jespersen notes:

The Latin perfect, which originated in an amalgamation of old preterits (aorists) and perfects, combines the syntactic functions of those two tenses. In Romanic verbs, however, we witness the same development as in the majority of the Gothonic verbs, the old perfect forms having lost their perfect-function and having become pure preterits, though with this difference from verbs, that they are aorists [definite pasts], because side by side with them there are imperfects. The real perfect as in Gothonic is expressed periphrastically.” (p. 269)

As Jespersen illustrates, Latin *scripsit* could mean “has written” as a present perfect, or “wrote” as a definite past, in opposition to a habitual descriptive imperfect *scribebat* (wrote or was writing) (p. 277). The distinction has been maintained in Portuguese: perfect *amei* | “I loved” < *amavi* together with imperfect *amava* | “I used to love” < *amabam*.

### **From Proto-Germanic to English**

According to Barber (1965) Indo-European had a great array of inflections. Proto-Germanic preserved many of these features but it simplified the verb system into two tenses: present and past. In Proto-Germanic there were forms for *I sing* and *I sang*, but no forms corresponding to *I shall sing, I am singing, I have sung*, and so on (p. 112). Old English had basically two tenses as

well. As Barber says, there were sentences in the perfect but they were rare and had a restricted use. For example, sentences like “He had broken a leg” possibly meant “he possessed a broken leg.” In addition, there was an inflection for the word “broken” in agreement with “leg,” as in “Hie hine ofslaegenne haefdon” (literally *They him slain had*), making the accusative masculine –ne agree with “hine.” However, this process of inflecting the participle was dying out even in Old English (p. 179). In Middle English, forms like “have wrote” and “have written” co-existed, as Baugh and Cable point out (1993, p. 245). Another difference was the use of *be* (along with *have*) in some perfect sentences, compared to the modern German past, which takes both *haben* and *sein* in a similar structure as the English present perfect: e.g. “Er *hat* einen Brief geschrieben” [*He has written a letter*] and “Sie *sind* in die Bibliothek gegangen” [*They have gone to the library*]. The use of *be* as a perfect auxiliary is still found in *She is gone* (Trask, 1997). In response to an online question about the origin of present perfect, Trask explains:

The perfect (both present and past) is really rather ancient in English: it is found in the Old English of a thousand years ago. At that time, certain intransitive verbs, mainly verbs of motion, formed their perfect with ‘be’ (or sometimes with a verb meaning ‘become’) instead of with ‘have’; this construction has now virtually disappeared, except with ‘go’: ‘She is gone’ is still normal, but \*‘She is come’ is archaic.

In early Old English, the participle in a perfect often agreed with the object noun phrase, and so a sentence of the form ‘I have him bound’ (with Old English word order and ‘bound’ agreeing with ‘him’) seemingly meant ‘I have him in my possession, in a bound state’. In other words, it was rather similar to the modern construction ‘I have a rib broken’. But the agreement was lost rather early, leading to the modern form and the modern interpretation.

It seems reasonable to think that the modern perfect owes more to Old English than to Middle English in its origins. If French had influenced the English perfect, then one should not expect it to have a permansive but rather a definite meaning, as in French. The development of this structure shows that the perfect has maintained a trend initiated long ago in Britain; this trend was not even followed by the German perfect, which became a definite past like French.

### **From Latin to Portuguese**

Like Old English, Latin also moves towards the use of analytic forms. The process may have taken place at the same time, but it is difficult to argue whether one has influenced the other because both languages had a verb form like *have* and a form for the past participle. Note, for example, that Gothic, the oldest Germanic language of which we have records, featured *haba* | “I have” and *habaida* | “I had.”<sup>2</sup> According to Camara (1972), Latin grammarians beginning from Varro (100 BC) divide the Latin verb system into two distinctive categories: *perfectum* (finished, concluded) and *infectum* (not completely finished, non-concluded) (p. 109). Distinguished from the infectum (imperfect) in different ways, the perfectum (perfect) is characterized by its regular suffix *-u-* as a marker and other processes like reduplication of initial syllable of root (perfect *cucurrit* vs. imperfect *currit*), vowel change (perfect *fecit* vs. imperfect *facit*), and unrelated forms (perfect *fuit* vs. imperfect *est*). The perfectum was also the tense of the non-durative aspect, although the present perfect somehow could be interpreted as finished for its past meaning and not finished for its present results. As Camara says, even in Classical Latin the aspectual notion “concluded” (finished) started to be in conflict with the temporal notion “present.” A support to his idea is given by Iordan and Manoliu (1972), who assume that the perfect tenses used to resemble the preterite in terms of content because they included the notion of anteriority. Therefore, perfect forms like *amauisti* | “you have loved” were reinterpreted as preterites in opposition to imperfect *amabas* | “you used to love.” A similar phenomenon occurred in other Romance languages. Iordan and Manoliu (1972) describe this transition from

Latin clearly: “ya en un período primitivo de las lenguas románicas se rehizo la oposición entre infectum y perfectum. En español, y menos en italiano, el valor perfectivo-resultativo se mantiene todavía con vitalidad; pero en general, la serie temporal, que en romance tubo un desarrollo analítico (...), perdió la posibilidad de expresar el aspecto” [*In an earlier period of Romance languages, there already occurred the opposition between the infectum and perfectum. In Spanish, and less in Italian, the perfective-resultative value remains, however, with vitality; but in general, the time series, that in Romance had an analytic display (...), lost the possibility of expressing the aspect*] (p. 325). Díaz y Díaz (1962) says that the use of *habere* + *past participle* results in the creation of new past tenses equivalent to the Romance past indefinite: “...domum Dei... habes ornatum... decoratum” [*The Lord’s house... you have adorned and decorated*] (p. 680). The same opinion is shared by Väänänen (1963): “le perfect a acquis une valeur secondaire de preterite (‘passé simple’) qui exprime un fait ayant eu lieu a un moment donné...” [*the perfect acquired a secondary value of a preterite that expresses a fact that has taken place in a past moment*] (p. 141). His illustration for that phenomenon with “Episcopum invitatum habes” [*you invited the bishop*] and “Omnia probatum habemus” [*we have judged everyone*] (p. 139) also exemplifies the use of accusative participle for all persons, and not in agreement with the object as before.

The change was not restricted to the preterite. To illustrate this point Iordan and Manoliu compare the standard sentence “Iussit vocari servos suos quibus *dedit* pecuniam” with its popular version “Dixit vocari servos suos quibus *dederat* pecuniam (Luc. XIX, 1, 27)”. These examples show the use of the perfect *dederat* for a pluperfect *dedit* in popular texts. Such confusion probably gave rise to the creation of analytic forms with *habere*, as Díaz y Díaz points out. At first, the new structure was restricted to transitive verbs. Like the old perfective *scripsi*, forms like in “habeo epistolam scriptam” could mean that the result of the action “scribere” was related to the object “epistolam” (the participle indicates that the action took place in the past) (Iordan and Manoliu 1972, p. 323). Later on, it started to be used with all verbs, with no distinction from stative and non-stative verbs, as in English: e.g. *I have known him for two years* and *She has met a nice guy*.

### **Portuguese Today**

The Modern Portuguese indicative has lost the distinction between the present perfect and the preterite. The so-called *pretérito perfeito* [literally *past perfect*]—e.g. “amaste” (you loved)—now has neither the form nor meaning of the old perfect.<sup>3</sup> The loss of the perfect marker *-u-* took place in Romance, and a good reason for that might be the shift from a perfective aspect to a definite meaning. Today it is hard to believe that at least in some contexts we can find examples of purely synthetic forms expressing the perfective aspect in Portuguese. Monteiro et al. (1980) did a contrastive analysis of the features of the English present perfect and Brazilian Portuguese “pretérito perfeito,” specifically *current relevance*, *completion*, *indefinite past*, and *still alive or active*. They observe that only [+completion] has been maintained in the BP form. As they point out, “predications with the PRETÉRITO PERFEITO are more ambiguous when not explicated by means other than the verb inflection itself” (p. 147). In fact, Portuguese shifted from the emphasis on the verb to other forms, including the analytic perfect, as described by Thomas (1969) and Schutz (2004). The table below can illustrate the shift from a synthetic to an analytic perfect and its possible meaning in Latin, Portuguese, and English:

Table 2 – Historical Shift

A. Latin	B. Portuguese	C. English
1. Scripsi epistolam	Escrevi uma carta	I wrote a letter
2. Habeo epistolam scriptam	Tenho escrita uma carta	I have a letter written
3. Habeo epistolam scriptum	Tenho escrito uma carta	I have written a letter

C2 changes the emphasis from “I” to another agent, probably a secretary. Pickbourn (1789) says that such an order can be tolerated in verse and that the participle *written* belongs not to the person who acts, “I,” but to the accusative “letter” (p. 13). This viewpoint does not contradict what I have just said about the act being performed by another agent. Possibly Modern English has changed its use since the time Pickbourn did his analysis, or perhaps he was referring to some specific occasions. B2 sounds strange to a native ear, although we find it in the literature or in rare cases such as in this example cited by Schmitt (2001):

- (30) Eu tenho feitas as camas desde segunda-feira.<sup>4</sup>  
 I have made-FEM. PL. the-FEM. PL. beds-FEM. PL. since Monday  
 “I have the beds made since Monday.” (p. 428)

As Schmitt points out, (30) does not support an iterative meaning in contrast to (31), which forces iteration.

- (31) Eu tenho feito as camas desde segunda-feira.  
 I have made the beds since Monday.  
 “I have been making the beds since Monday.” (p. 428)

However similar to (31), B3 does not on its own convey the repetitive expression of this structure in Portuguese. Instead, I would say “tenho escrito muitas cartas (ultimamente)” [*I’ve written many letters (lately)*] or “tenho escrito uma carta toda semana” [*I’ve written a letter every week*]. What is important here is not current relevance, as in English, but repetition, continuation up to the moment of speaking. This characteristic of BP perfect forms is frequently described with the feature [+iteration] (Costa, 1997; De Paula Scott, 1995).

According to Camara, even in Latin the declination of the past participle was dying out and vanished completely after a period of free variation in the classical period. With his idea that *habeo litteras scriptas* was replaced by *tenho uma carta escrita (em meu poder)* | “I have a letter written (in my possession)”, the author assumes that the Portuguese compound sentence can be traced to a structure established in Latin to indicate the permansive aspect. Derived from the Latin perfect, such a structure has been preserved in Portuguese, which has best retained the meaning of the original permansive construction. In his analysis of periphrastic forms, the author observes that Portuguese lost its ability to invert the object and the auxiliary *haver* was replaced by *ter* even in the classical period, thus distinguishing Portuguese from the rest of the Romance languages. About the modern use of sentences like *Tenho escrito uma carta* he concludes: “the general semantic unity of the construction is not in conflict with certain special meanings that are associated with a few tenses. The present perfect, both in indicative and in the subjunctive, is the only tense that indicates duration, continual or repetitive, until the present moment” (p. 145). Iordan and Manoliu (1972) make a similar analysis. They illustrate the first use with “habeo scriptam epistolam (en posesión de una carta que escribi.)” For Iordan and Manoliu “ter llegó a ser el auxiliar de tiempo por excelencia y perdió su posibilidad de expresar

el aspecto” (p. 327) [*Ter became the Standard auxiliary and lost its possibility of expressing the aspect*]. This structure presents a reduced use in Modern Portuguese, but cannot be replaced by any other form, as Thomas (1969) points out.

Although derived from similar Indo-European roots and Latin background, American English and Brazilian Portuguese have chosen their particular structures and meanings of the permansive aspect. AmE still uses the present perfect productively whereas BP takes a variety of forms that include the present, the preterite, and the perfect (together with other features around the verb phrase). Yet there is a trend in both languages towards the preterite – BP being ahead of English in this sense. The transition from a perfect to a preterite seems to result from a universal tendency, as Jespersen concludes. However, today this change seems to outrun the verb structure and in the future we may be producing utterances like “I go yesterday,” “I go today,” “I go now,” “I go tomorrow” or even “I already go.” Whether or not this is likely to happen, teaching the present perfect is still one of our concerns as ESL teachers.

### **End Notes**

1. This example is cited by Raymond Murphy. (2004). *English grammar in use*. Cambridge University Press.
2. This example is cited by Charles L. Barber. (1965). *The story of language*. P. 113.
3. “Amaste” is only used in some parts of Brazil. Other forms for “you loved” are “você amou” or the nonstandard “tu amou.”
4. A reader suggested that the sentence sounds more natural today when inverted: “Tenho as camas feitas desde segunda-feira.” De Paula Scott (1995, p. 38), for example, cites:

- (1) a. Tenho a lição estudada.
- b. [I]have the lesson studied.

As the author points out, the lesson was studied in the past and is studied now. This kind of sentence is frequent in Portuguese and has the same meaning as in “Tenho estudada a lição,” the latter being more literary, as in another example that De Paula Scott gives:

- (2) a. Tenho guardada uma lembrança da Tia Filó.
- b. [I]have kept-*FEM*. a-*FEM*. memory-*FEM*. of-the Aunt Filo.

The difference between English and Portuguese, regardless of inversion, is that in Portuguese the action does not have to be performed by another agent. Compare:

- (3) a. Tenho a roupa lavada toda semana.
- b. [I]have the clothes washed every week.
- (4) a. Tenho a comida preparada desde ontem.
- b. [I]have the food cooked since yesterday.

While (3a) means that someone else washes the clothes every week, (4a) means that the food was cooked yesterday and is now cooked and that “I” [the speaker] did it.



## CHAPTER 5 METHODOLOGY

This research was conducted over a period of nine months, from March to December, 2003. The perfect/simple distinction was the main focus of the research. The stative was the control focus. These forms were observed and assessed through journals, think-aloud protocols, and translation/grammaticality judgment tests.<sup>1</sup>

### **Research focus**

This study focuses on the *AmE perfect vs. BP present simple* distinction because it is one place where Portuguese usage is consistently ungrammatical. The *AmE perfect vs. BP perfect* distinction has the advantage of the similarity of forms. On the other hand, the distinction between perfect and past simple is already being blurred in American English, especially involving adverbs like *ever* and *already*, as discussed in chapters 3 and 4. True, the association between present perfect and simple past is widespread among L2 learners. Bardovi-Harlig (1997), who studied the emergence of the present perfect in an adult L2 English context, suggests that the simple past/present perfect association is the strongest of all tense-aspect associations (63.1% of overgeneralizations and 37.1% of undergeneralizations). As she puts it, ...when a learner uses the past or the present in place of the present perfect, only one part of the meaning of the present perfect is encoded. The use of the past shows the learner's association of events or situations prior to the time of speaking with the present-perfect environment. (...) A learner who uses the past in a present perfect environment encodes only the feature [+anterior] (...) to the exclusion of the second feature, current relevance. The use of the present shows the learner's association of the present perfect environment with present relevance, to the exclusion of the past nature of the present perfect. (Bardovi-Harlig, 1997, p. 249)

In the case of Portuguese speakers, even though the simple past / present perfect association is significant, it is the present simple / present perfect distinction that seems semantically more challenging. This happens, as Schmitt discusses, because AmE and BP perfects are set quite differently compared to the simple present in both languages. While the simple present is habitual in both languages (e.g. He dances = Ele dança), the perfect is only habitual in English (e.g. She has known French # Ela tem sabido francês); the Portuguese perfect is iterative, not habitual. Therefore, the research will investigate the contrast between *AmE perfect and BP present simple* because it is more obviously ungrammatical.

As argued above, studies in SLA have argued that to notice distinctions as such and learn to produce accurate forms in the target language, adult speakers need to attend to form (Schmidt and Frota 1986). The question is whether form-focused instruction can help learners master the differences in perfect usage. To answer this question, this study contrasts focus on form tutoring of the perfect / present simple distinction with a control structure that will not be tutored: the stative.

English has a number of verbs that cannot be used in progressive forms, especially if they refer to stative meanings, such as *know*, *want*, *like*, *need*: e.g. *She needs an umbrella because it's raining*. Portuguese has no distinction between dynamic and stative meanings, Therefore,

dynamic verbs such as *estudar* (study) and stative verbs such as *gostar* (like) have a similar semantics in Portuguese.

- (32) Você está estudando agora?  
You are studying now  
“Are you studying now?”
- (33) Você estuda com música?  
You study with music  
“Do you study with music?”
- (34) Você está gostando da maçã?  
You are liking of-the apple  
“Do you like the apple (that you’re eating)?”
- (35) Você gosta de maçã?  
You like of apple?  
c. Do you like apples?

However, there is a clear contrast between the simple and progressive. As Thomas (1969) points out, “the distinction is mandatory, and necessary to avoid misunderstanding. Only in very special circumstances is it permissible to use **eu falo** [I speak], if the meaning intended is **eu estou falando** [I am speaking]” (p. 198). He continues: “The two forms are not interchangeable in [Brazilian Portuguese], and the simple present cannot replace the progressive without changing the meaning” (p. 201). For example, Thomas mentions the difference of meaning in the use of the verb *ouvir* | “hear” in the progressive (36) and simple (37):

- (36) Você não está ouvindo?  
You not are hearing  
“Don’t you hear?”
- (37) Você não ouve?  
You not hear  
“Are you deaf?”

This semantic difference in the L1 and L2 makes Brazilian students produce sentences in English like *I’m liking this city*. This type of sentences is as frequent as the confusion of the *AmE present perfect* / *BP present simple* distinction. Since it will not be tutored, the stative can function as a control structure to examine the relevance of instruction to the acquisition of the perfect.

### **Subject**

The subject is Eriene,<sup>2</sup> a 31-year-old Portuguese teacher from Salvador, Bahia, Brazil, who has been living in New Orleans since March 2003. Prior to coming to the U.S., she had taken English classes for two years in a CLT program. She had also been exposed to one year of formal instruction in college. Since coming to New Orleans, she has spent two months in an intensive program of a language institute and two months in a beginning conversation class at a community college. She has also had sporadic fluency-focused language exchange sessions with native speakers. In the meantime she is preparing to take the TOEFL and GRE with practice tests and study books because she wants to apply for a Master’s in Sociology at UNO. She is also auditing a graduate level class at UNO. Her undergraduate major was Portuguese teaching, and she is familiar with grammatical terminology and concepts. Because E is a language teacher, she is highly interested in grammar. Given her interest in learning English, E agreed to participate in the research in exchange for tutoring. Her exposure to spoken English has been minimal, but she has been able to communicate in service and transactional interactions such as checking out

books at the library, using the telephone, and asking for information around the city. She is still new to idiomatic English and often makes tense-choice errors such as “I have three months here” (for *I’ve been here three months*) and “I’m liking this course” (for *I like this course*). As she is not currently enrolled in any ESL class, the tutoring sessions with the researcher will be the only type of form-focused instruction she will have.

### **Journals and Recordings**

E wrote 11 journals and recorded 3 think-aloud protocols, where she talked about her life in the United States, the challenges of learning English, and her overall language learning and literacy experience. The very first journal drafts (not revisions) were used for analysis. Corrections were sometimes provided [in brackets] to make the text clearer. Sentences **in bold** indicate that they are relevant to the study. Recordings were transcribed and errors maintained. Hesitations and repetitions were deleted so the text can be more reader-friendly. For example, if E said, “I I I say I said them I said to them,” the final transcription would be “I said to them.” Although her repetitive utterances show that E is struggling to produce correct forms, this research focused on the perfect and stative only. In such instances, her performance was documented almost verbatim to the original recording.

### **Tutoring**

To help overcome errors identified in journals and recordings, one-to-one rule teaching and error correction on the present perfect were provided through individual conferencing with E. In addition, the conversations between L and E during tutoring sessions focused on other grammatical and stylistic features that E had trouble with, excluding reference to stative verbs. No reference to these verbs was made because of the methodology—as said before, stative verbs were used to contrast with the perfect in terms of relevancy of instruction to the subject’s grammaticality. No teaching material was used but E’s own writing. She often asked questions related to her homework or curiosities about the American culture and the English language. All the conversations were conducted in Portuguese, the native language of both speakers.

### **Other Formal Instruction**

Besides tutoring, E had other types of formal instruction. She attended three ESL classes: in a church, language institute and community college. Although the effect of these classes was not the main focus of the study, it was discussed whenever relevant to E’s form awareness, as mentioned in her journals or recordings.

### **Testing**

After tutoring was provided, she took a set of tests consisting of English-Portuguese translation and grammaticality judgment questions (cf. Appendix A). In addition to translating sentences from Portuguese into English, the subject choose between grammatical and ungrammatical sentences in English. The two tests have 48 and 96 questions, respectively, with a combination of target questions each and distractors. The target questions address both perfect and stative forms. The distractors are other tenses mixed together to deflect from the test items. Questions on each section were randomized with an online research tool (Urbaniak and Plous, 1997). The goal of testing was to examine the speaker’s ability to understand and produce correct forms of the perfect and stative in English.

### **Why Use Multiple Measures to Test Acquisition?**

The first question was how to define acquisition. According to Ellis (2001), who discusses the advantages and disadvantages of focus on form research methods, target-like accuracy is largely used in SLA studies. However, he argues that this definition “falls foul of the comparative fallacy (i.e. it assumes that acquisition can only be measured in terms of target-language norms).” In addition, this definition “ignores the fact that interlanguage development is U-shaped and that, in some cases, a learner may use a specific form more accurately at an earlier stage of acquisition than a later” (p. 33).

Another question was what measures to use. Ellis says that grammaticality judgments are largely used in SLA research, but that “the ability to judge a sentence as grammatical or ungrammatical does not necessarily correlate with the ability to produce the targeted feature correctly” (p. 34). He notes: “A number of researchers now opt for multiple measures... which, when the results obtained concur, allow conclusions to be made with greater conviction. However, until [focus on form] studies, as a matter of routine, include some measure of learners' ability to process a structure under real operating conditions (as in spontaneous speech), doubts will remain about the nature of reported instructional effects” (pp. 34-35).

This study has also opted for multiple measures (historical, qualitative, and correlational). The following analogy can illustrate this choice: to find an address in the city some people will do it better by looking it up on a map while others prefer to ask people on the street. Both methods are useful and complement one another. Of course, without maps one can still get around by asking others for directions. But it's safer to use both strategies.

Returning to this research, the goal of the journals/recordings was to investigate the subject's interaction with (a) positive evidence, (b) explicit data, and (c) negative evidence. The tests, on the other hand, were used to confirm/refute the results obtained from journals/recordings.

### **End Notes**

1. See Appendix B for the subject's language learning calendar.
2. Eriene is the author's wife. From now on, she will be referred as E and the author as L. Although there are gender-related issues that could be investigated, they do not fall under the scope of this study.

## CHAPTER 6 DATA ANALYSIS

### Journals and Recordings

After E wrote most of the journals and did the recordings, she and L started talking about her writing, and specifically her verbal constructions. Focusing on the *AmE perfect / BP simple present* distinction but also overviewing other types of problems, E and L analyzed sentences where the present perfect had been required and whether E had used it. The conversations (in Portuguese) also elucidated many aspects of E's prior instruction, especially the fact she had not been taught the perfect/present contrast even though she had learned about the perfect before. As explained earlier, L and E never talked about the stative. On the other hand, E was quite interested in discussing her process of learning the present perfect, as will be discussed further.

Her journals and recordings showed only two occurrences of correct present perfect usage (table 3).

Table 3 - Present Perfect

Data	# Perfect Required	# Perfect Supplied	% Accuracy
J 1	-	-	-
J 2	2	0	0
J 3	1	0	0
R 1	1	0	0
R 2	-	-	-
J 4	-	-	-
J 5	-	-	-
J 6	-	-	-
J 7	-	-	-
J 8	1	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
-----			
Tutoring begins			
-----			
J 9	-	-	-
J 10	-	-	-
R 3	2	2	100
J 11	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>100</b>

J = journal      R = recording

Note that before tutoring was provided, she did not supply any correct forms. This difference in performance could be attributed, on one hand, to her exposure to positive evidence and, on the other, to the effects of focus on form. If positive evidence furnished her with information about the perfect that prompted her to use it correctly regardless of attending to form, then we can

expect the same kind of results for the stative, the structure that was not tutored. However, if focus on form affected her interaction with positive evidence, then her performance in the perfect ought to be significantly superior.

The subject had no trouble producing either stative or progressive correctly when both L1 and L2 required them. She did have difficulty when the progressive was prohibited or restricted in the L2 but was the best option in the L1 (table 4). This situation, however, did not occur frequently in the data.

Although the study had predicted that E would use verbs such as *want*, *need*, *know*, or *hear* in the progressive due to L1 interference, there were very few opportunities in the spontaneous data in which this confusion could have occurred—when it occurred, she did have problems. The paucity of the data from journals and recordings did not show whether she had improved or declined in the stative over time. Yet, the qualitative analysis provided valuable insights into her acquisition of both perfect and stative. Because the study had predicted that the data from journals and recordings could be insufficient, translation and grammaticality judgments were applied. The results of these tests confirmed the qualitative findings that focus on form had a positive effect on the acquisition of the perfect while the stative suffered from not having such an approach. The one verb that she got right (*miss*), even though the study had predicted an error due to L1 interference, can be explained in terms of instruction. When asked why she did not use the progressive in “Today I am very homesick. I **miss** many things, many friends...” [journal 4], even though it sounds more appropriate in Portuguese given the contextual boundaries set by the first sentence, E explained that she had been taught that *miss* does not take a progressive. She recalled a prior learning event in Brazil in which L was asked to translate “I miss you” into Portuguese for a friend who had gotten a letter from her American boyfriend.

Table 4 - Stative

Data	# Stative Required	# Stative Supplied	% Accuracy
J 1	-	-	-
J 2	-	-	-
J 3	-	-	-
R 1	-	-	-
R 2	2	0	0
J 4	1	1	100
J 5	-	-	-
J 6	-	-	-
J 7	-	-	-
J 8	-	-	-
J 9	-	-	-
J 10	-	-	-
R 3	-	-	-
J 11	1	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>25</b>

J = journal      R = recording

### **Tests**

After being tutored, E took a BP=>AmE translation test and a grammaticality judgment test (cf. appendix A). In the translation test (table 5), E scored 87% in the tutored distinction (BP/simple

vs. AmE/perfect) versus 0% in the untutored distinction (BP/progressive vs. AmE/simple). While the superior result in the perfect does not mean that she acquired the structure, one can see that focus on form affected her performance. The impact of focus on form was also salient in the grammaticality judgments (table 6), in which E identified 87% of ungrammatical forms from the first group against 0% of ungrammatical forms from the second group.

Table 5 - Translation

Structure	# Sentences Given	# Sentences Correct	% Accuracy
Perfect	8	7	87
Stative	8	0	0

Table 6 - Grammaticality Judgments  
(Questions which are grammatical in Portuguese but ungrammatical in English)

Structure	# Sentences Given	# Sentences Correct	% Accuracy
Perfect	8	7	87
Stative	8	0	0

The test results suggest that there is acquisition of the perfect, but not the stative. It also suggests that focus on form can be beneficial to the acquisition of structures that are semantically complex. We will now analyze the data from a qualitative perspective. This approach will allow us to better interpret the subject's process of acquisition of the perfect and stative.

### Subject's Reflections on the Perfect

While going to ESL class, E had the chance to study the present perfect in two meetings. She carefully read the handouts she had been given in class and did all the exercises. She was also taught the present progressive, except for the dynamic/stative distinction. When she had questions about her homework, she asked L for clarification. E became focused while talking and writing about the present perfect. For example, she wrote/talked about events when she misused the present perfect. She also asked her teachers to emphasize the subject. Her interest in talking about the present perfect shows, on one hand, her willingness to help L with the research and, on the other, her familiarity with form-focused learning.

In recording [3] E draws a careful analysis of her process of learning the present perfect. First, she recalls having difficulty understanding the semantic differences between the structure in AmE and BP while she was studying English in Brazil.

[Recording 3 – September]

I remember that there was an exercise that my classmate needed to ask me. The question was, “**have you ever traveled by plane**, have you ever... things... Oh, I remember that was questions about things that we did in once time in the past, maybe questions about travel, about have been in the Europe or another country. But my answer was always, “no.” And my classmates' answers uh was always “yes,” so I think my classmates are so rich because they can travel a lot, they can have a lot of money to stay in another count[r]y that many times or in the past until the moment. Uh, I was wrong because in that moment I think that the present perfect was the same rules in Portuguese.

(38) Have you ever traveled by plane?

In (38) she understood the feature [+iteration], which is typical of BP perfect forms; therefore, she did not understand what her classmates were asking. She thought they had asked her whether she had been traveling by plane on a regular basis.

When she came to New Orleans, she had many learning events involving the present perfect. Her insights usually occurred in written/oral communication with native speakers.

[Recording 3 – September]

...my experiences in present perfect in the first month here in New Orleans was terrible, because I can't understand anything in present perfect. Sometimes I could understand but when the people ask me, "**how long have you been here?**" so every time I answered the wrong answer. And when the people ask me, "**how long are going to stay here?**" I answered the wrong answer too. I couldn't disting[uish] the difference between *how long are you going to stay here* and *how long have you been here*.

(39) How long have you been here?

(40) How long are you going to stay here?

She notices tense-choice issues in (39, 40), which prompt her to grasp the meaning of the present perfect.

Her second learning event in New Orleans involves the distinction between AmE present perfect and BP present simple, but it also shows idiomatic differences that she was not aware of.

[Recording 3 – September]

And other experience with this present perfect was when I wrote an e-mail [American] penfriend N. She asked me many things and one thing was, "how long long has I been here." And I answered this e-mail and I said, "**I have three months here.**" In the other day she sent the e-mail saying, "oh, it's a pity that you're going to come back to Brazil in three months." When I read this, I think, "Oh, maybe the tense that I used with her was wrong." And I ask L and L said, "Oh, you need to use the present perfect in this sentence because if you say, 'I have three months here,' the people are going to understand the opposite because **you have been here for three months**, but you don't come back to Brazil in three months." After that, I could understand the difference and the importance and the use the present perfect.

(41) I have three months here.

(42) You have been here for three months.

Sentence (41) is a literal translation from BP, documented in recording [1] as well. We will return to it in the next section. In (42) the information about AmE is provided through L and E's conversations in Portuguese. By paraphrasing L's speech, she seems to have used the present perfect accurately; however, since this is metatalk, it does not mean that the present perfect was acquired.

At English class at the language institute, E faced a conflict between the simple past and the present perfect:

[Recording 3 – September]

Another experience was when my teacher asked me, "Eriene, **have you finished your homework?**" And [I] said, "Yes, I finish I finished my homework." But I asked him, "Why did you use the present perfect, because my homework is finished? I finished since yesterday my homework and now today I didn't take this homework." So he said, "Oh, you can use the simple past or the present perfect." When she [he] said this, I was confused, more confused, about the present perfect. I think he was right when he used the present perfect, but he couldn't u h explain to me about the difference simple past and present perfect.

(43) Have you finished your homework?

Here it seems that E did not understand the feature [+current relevance] but only the feature [+anterior], relying greatly in L1 past simple semantics. The teacher's explanation, however, did not trigger her perception of the differences. The BP present perfect is associated with [+iteration], which does not correspond to the English perfect. Therefore, for novice Brazilian learners such as E it is quite difficult to perceive the meaning of the perfect in English without access to translations into the L1. This view is also supported by Bond (2001), who suggests translation as one of the strategies to help Brazilians learn the perfect.



Another experience she describes also involves current relevance.

[Recording 3 – September]

Other experience about the present perfect was when my ex-student from Brazil, S, sent an e-mail saying, “**My telephone has changed to...**” And I was confused and asked L, and he said, “She used this tense because a new thing happened in this moment. It’s like a new action or something like that.” When I asked the same thing for my teacher, she couldn’t explain to me the same thing that L said because I think she’s American and she use the tense all the time and she can’t disting[uish]... She can’t explain for me the difference because in my language it’s different, it’s different... Uh, maybe L can help me more than American people because his language is same than mine. Umm... But after that, my classmate ask for my teacher to learn us present perfect... to learn, no, to teach us the present perfect. She hand in some handouts and now I’m studying for these handouts and helping me a lot because has some examples, some specific examples in the present perfect. Now I can understand more than before.

(44) My telephone has changed.

In (44) she also fails to perceive current relevance. And she does not trust the feedback from native speakers because she believes they do not know about the semantic distinctions between AmE and BP. Although she had been exposed to current relevance in (43) as well, she did not seem to have benefited from that learning event.

Her interest in learning the present perfect is so intense that she even dreams about it.

[Journal 11 – November]

I **have dreamed** already speaking in English before this dream I am going to describe, but this dream is curious because there was someone who did a wrong correct about my question.

So, I dreamed yesterday night I returned to [language institute] for one day only—I don’t know why. There I founded the same classmates for my conscience, but they were different people, including the secretary and teachers. These people were acquaintance people in my last life.

While I was waiting for the first class that the [language institute] was worse than before because the first class was so much delayed and the teachers had to wait the blackboard. The blackboard was complicated because was movable and the secretary keep it with her office every day in the end of the classes.

During we was waiting, showed up a teacher of mine who was my History teacher in the preparing course to exam for University. How I was surprised to see him like an English teacher here in New Orleans, I tried to know about that situation and him starting with this question: “**Are you living here?**” Instead, he answer my question, he was worried to correct me and he said: “This is a hard struture question for Brasilian because we don’t use the Present Perfect in this situation, but in English you have to say: “**Have you lived here?**” I was confused in the first time because I thought I was right and even thought: “Maybe I forgot to say ‘now’, so he thought in another situation”. But, after I agreed with him and concluded: “Learning English with Brasilian teachers is better because they understand that I try to say.”

(45) I have dreamed already speaking in English.

(46) Are you living here?

(47) Have you lived here?

In (45) E attempted to use the perfect, perhaps motivated by instruction; however, the sentence would be better interpreted as a pluperfect: e.g. *I had (already) dreamed about speaking English before (I had) this dream I’m going to describe/tell*. While she perceives (47) as ungrammatical, she is not aware that (46) is also ungrammatical. This is a clear example of how explicit data on the perfect might have helped her identify the error. We will now examine the perfect and stative in more detail individually.

### **AmE Present Perfect vs. BP Present Simple**

With regards to this distinction, E produces the following negative sentences:

(48) I still don’t accustom with his new name. [journal 2]

“I still haven’t gotten used to his new name.”

(49) He still doesn’t learn Spanish... [journal 2]

“He still hasn’t learned Spanish.”

- (50) Unfortunately, I don't meet anyone that want to talk with me... [journal 3]  
"I still haven't found anyone who wants to talk with me."

Sentences (48-50) do not result from L1 interference because BP requires a past form, not the simple present. It is not clear why E did not use the past. She had used the past simple in negative sentences elsewhere.

In (51) E uses the present simple as in BP; however, she does not know about the idiomatic differences until she faces a real communication problem through email [recording 3] when a native speaker thought she was going back to Brazil in three months. (52) is an example of L1 transfer because she uses the present simple for [+duration], hypothesizing that it is possible in AmE.

- (51) I have (almost) three months here. [recordings 1, 3]  
"I have been here (almost) three months."  
(52) There are two days I feel a pain in my heart. [journal 8]  
"For two days I have felt a pain in my heart."

While she does benefit from her interaction with native speakers, E says instruction is useful in helping her become aware of idiomatic differences. Although E gains awareness of forms and meanings related to the perfect, there is no clear evidence that instruction on the AmE perfect / BP simple distinction led to acquisition. The perfect forms that she produced correctly might be due to metalinguistic thinking.

### **AmE Stative vs. BP Progressive**

This distinction shows that the untutored form, stative, was not learned. E had read about it in the grammarbook she used for the ESL class at the language institute (Krohn et al. 1971); however, the passage did not have enough examples with stative verbs (not even as incorrect sentences). The authors state, "Verbs such as *like*, *be*, *have* (=possession), *know*, *mean*, *see*, and *understand* indicate situations or states, rather than actions or events" (p. 38). This explanation was followed by an exercise requiring students to pick up verbs from a list and write sentences in the appropriate form. E did not do the exercise and she said her teachers did not compare/contrast stative and dynamic verbs; their main focus was on the distinction between present simple and present progressive.

In her journals and recordings, E produced sentences like the following:

- (53) I live in New Orleans with my husband... [journal 1]  
"I live in New Orleans with my husband."  
(54) I am living in New Orleans because I am following my husband." [journal 1]  
"I live in Orleans because I am accompanying my husband."  
(55) Are you living here? [journal 11]  
"Do you live here?"  
(56) I like this house... [journal 1]  
"I like this house."  
(57) I'm liking this course... [recording 2]  
"I like this course."

E is unaware that AmE, unlike BP, cannot take stative forms such as (55) and (57). (54) seems acceptable. Noticing this difference in terms of form awareness, the research attempted to investigate the effects of focus on form to acquisition.

### **Discussion**

Even if E had produced accurate instances of present perfect, it still would not be possible to assert that she had acquired the form. Correct usage of the present perfect only occurred when she was talking about it. In this case, it is possible to argue that she was “monitoring” her speech (Krashen). Because the study did not intend to prompt her to use the perfect, unless naturally, it relied mostly on the test results.

With regards to the stative, she translated *BP progressive* (58) into *AmE progressive* (59) where simple present is required, showing evidence of L1 interference.

(58) Minha filha está querendo mudar de escola. [question 8 – test 1]

My daughter is wanting to-change of school

“My daughter wants to transfer to another school.”

(59) My daughter is wanting to change to another school.

On the other hand, she incorrectly translated the same structure in (60) into a perfect form (61), showing evidence of her struggle to find the correct form.

(60) Você está gostando da nova professora? [question 35 – test 1]

You are liking of-the new teacher

“Do you like the new teacher?”

(61) Have you liked the new teacher?

As for the perfect, she shows understanding of the AmE perfect / BP simple distinction in the translation of (62) into (63) :

(62) Conheço aquele rapaz desde criança. [question 14 – test 1]

Know(1sg) that young-man since child

“I have known that young man since I was a child.”

(63) I have known that boy since I was child.

However, she does not tick a similar structure in (64) as ungrammatical.

(64) \*Mary doesn’t play volleyball since last week. [question 68 – test 2]

If we look at the big picture, we can see a clear influence of focus on form to accuracy.

However, neither qualitative nor quantitative data to date have been enough to assert the present perfect was fully acquired. This shows that the learner is still in the process of acquiring that form. As Jane Wills (1996) puts it, “a rule will not become internalised until the learner’s developing language can accommodate it.” The author assumes that the present perfect may take some time before the learner can start using it accurately. Becoming aware of the differences between AmE and BP forms can be a start position.

## CHAPTER 7 CONCLUSION

To contribute to the debate about the importance of focus on form, this study investigated a Portuguese-speaking adult's acquisition of the English perfect from a historical, correlational, and qualitative viewpoint. The present perfect (e.g. *have written, has spoken*) has stood out as a challenge for ESL teachers in Brazil and their students. Because it is not semantically equivalent in English and Portuguese (though the Portuguese perfect has a similar form), and because Portuguese offers an array of possibilities corresponding to this structure, the perfect offers significant difficulty for Brazilian learners. To facilitate acquisition of this structure, many ESL teachers following Krashen's theory have used context-enriched tasks such as *find someone who...* in which students implicitly produce sentences in the target language. While meaningfully engaged in the conversation, they walk around trying to find other peers who have eaten alligator or driven a BMW, for instance. Other teachers have deviated from Krashen's ideas and emphasized focus on form through translations into the L1, contrastive analysis, and error correction. Krashen's (1985) main argument is that explicit grammar instruction has no effect on L2 acquisition. He argues that adult learners only acquire the target language from access to modified input and provided that they are willing to take risk, e.g. speak up despite of their accent or grammatical errors. However, other researchers advocating focus on form argue that comprehensible input alone does not help learners to acquire the target language; learners must *notice* their mistakes so that they can produce correct forms (e.g. Schmidt and Frota 1986).

This study investigated the effect of grammar discussions and error correction in the case where L1 simple present corresponds to L2 present perfect. We have argued that this distinction is semantically challenging for Brazilian speakers to learn from comprehensible input alone because without focus on form (e.g. metatalk) they cannot *notice* meanings related to the perfect aspect that are not salient in input. For example, the L2 notion of *current relevance* diverges from the L1 feature *iteration* in sentences like L2 *I have written to Peter* / L1 *Tenho escrito para Pedro*. In order to perceive this distinction, learners need to have explicit reference to form. To evaluate the effect of focus on form on L2 present perfect, a contrast was made between this distinction and that of L1 progressive / L2 simple present. The second distinction, which did not receive any explicit treatment, offers a similar semantic difficulty for Brazilian learners. The use of the progressive with verbs such as *know, need, and want* is restricted in English whereas Portuguese can take the progressive with equivalent verbs. The importance of this contrast was to verify whether the untutored distinction could have the same results as the tutored one. This would favor Krashen's argument that formal instruction does not affect acquisition, but performance alone. Our results showed the opposite. Although exposed to a significant amount of comprehensible input during the ten-month period of the study, the subject's performance in the perfect (the tutored structure) was significantly superior to her performance in the stative (the untutored structure). This difference in performance can be explained in terms of her lack of formal instruction on the stative. Without learning to *notice* the distinction between L1 progressive and L2 stative, the subject failed to produce accurate sentences and to identify

ungrammatical ones. On the other hand, her access to focus on form on the perfect through metatalk allowed her to perceive nuances of meaning related to the perfect aspect and, consequently, avoid tense-choice errors. Whether or not this momentary success in the perfect will lead to acquisition remains to be found. *Noticing* semantic differences and similarities between two historically and formally related structures, L1 and L2 perfects, may be an important step towards the acquisition of the L2 form.

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## APPENDIX A

TESTE 1 / NOME: \_\_\_\_\_ DATA: \_\_/\_\_/\_\_

Sem consultar o dicionário ou a gramática, traduza as frases abaixo para o inglês.
--

- 1 A cozinha está cheirando a alho.
- 2 Você já foi à Suíça?
- 3 Estou planejando viajar nas férias.
- 4 Tem nevado no norte do país.
- 5 O grupo está na cidade há menos de um mês.
- 6 Minha irmã acha que devo estudar música.
- 7 Que disciplinas você tem estudado na faculdade?
- 8 Minha filha está querendo mudar de escola.
- 9 Roberto está tocando com esta banda faz um mês.
- 10 O meu pai tem aquele carro há dois anos.
- 11 Como você tem passado?
- 12 Você parece triste.
- 13 Paula está trabalhando na biblioteca.
- 14 Conheço aquele rapaz desde criança.
- 15 Fique um pouco mais. Estou adorando a sua companhia.
- 16 Ela está sempre ajudando aos amigos.
- 17 É a primeira vez que bebo caipirinha.
- 18 Ele tem vindo aqui com frequência.
- 19 Jorge acaba de telefonar.
- 20 Não pegue a caneta. O seu irmão está usando.
- 21 Estou pesando mais depois de casado.
- 22 Nosso computador está sempre dando problema.
- 23 Ele está trabalhando agora e não pode atender o telefone.
- 24 Meu namorado está detestando o meu novo visual.
- 25 Estamos viajando na próxima semana.
- 26 Tem dois dias que Fred não vai à escola.
- 27 Carla tem escrito como sempre?
- 28 Eles compreendem a situação das crianças.
- 29 Ela sente que alguma coisa está errada.
- 30 Já estão sabendo da novidade na escola.
- 31 Tem feito muito frio no inverno?
- 32 Há duas semanas que os seus amigos estão te procurando.
- 33 Os alunos tem perdido aulas como antes?
- 34 Eu estou morando em Nova Orleans há um ano.

- 35 Você está gostando da nova professora?
- 36 A mãe de Jane trabalha em um banco.
- 37 Gosto de comer cereais no café da manhã.
- 38 Há quanto tempo você está aqui?
- 39 Muitos candidatos já passaram nas provas, e ela continua estudando.
- 40 Estão precisando de profissionais com dois anos de experiência.
- 41 Sara trabalha na Shell faz três anos.
- 42 Alguém está batendo na porta. Você pode abrir?
- 43 Ela sabe a resposta.
- 44 Maria ainda não encontrou uma professora de música para o filho.
- 45 O que você tem feito recentemente?
- 46 É incrível! Jane nunca comeu jambalaia.
- 47 Você está parecendo um palhaço com esta camisa.
- 48 Meus avós moram no Rio de Janeiro.

TESTE 2 / NOME: \_\_\_\_\_ DATA: \_\_ / \_\_ / \_\_

Todo mundo tem uma intuição de quando uma estrutura é possível ou não na língua. Geralmente o falante percebe quando algo soa estranho, mas nem sempre sabe explicar por quê. Observe as frases abaixo:

- a. Ninguém sabe o que pode acontecer.
- b. Tudo isso pode acontecer.
- c. Não me pergunte o que pode acontecer.
- d. Duvido que isso pode acontecer.

Você acha que alguma dessas frases parece estranha ou incorreta? Muitos diriam que a letra d não é gramaticalmente aceitável. Você saberia dizer por quê?

Agora, seguindo a sua intuição, marque abaixo apenas as frases que você sente que **não** são possíveis na língua inglesa.

- 1 ( ) He's really looking upset.
- 2 ( ) Many species of animals have already been destroyed.
- 3 ( ) The rice smells like garlic.
- 4 ( ) The secretary just finishes sending an e-mail.
- 5 ( ) My sister wants to get married soon.
- 6 ( ) Do you like the Spanish class?
- 7 ( ) I know James since high school.
- 8 ( ) Two years ago the governor appointed a committee to study the problem.
- 9 ( ) Don't take the magazine. Your daddy is reading it.
- 10 ( ) The singer is in town for almost two weeks.
- 11 ( ) He owns this motorbike for about a year.
- 12 ( ) It's the first time I've ever played chess.

- 13 ( ) Jason is singing at this club for almost two months now.
- 14 ( ) The beauty of the beach surprises tourist from all over the world.
- 15 ( ) He's owned this car for less than a year.
- 16 ( ) It's the first time I eat gumbo.
- 17 ( ) Have you been doing anything special lately?
- 18 ( ) The new employee doesn't know the company's policies.
- 19 ( ) Many schools have already evaluated their programs.
- 20 ( ) They're all knowing about the problem.
- 21 ( ) Have you ever been to Europe?
- 22 ( ) They're always helping one another.
- 23 ( ) We're needing responsible workers.
- 24 ( ) So far few candidates have applied for the position.
- 25 ( ) How long have you been here?
- 26 ( ) I'm planning to travel on my holidays.
- 27 ( ) Did you ever go to Argentina?
- 28 ( ) Carnival takes place in February.
- 29 ( ) Recent studies have brought public attention to this debate.
- 30 ( ) Seven days have been enough to get to know the kids.
- 31 ( ) Many organizations intend to endorse the government's decision.
- 32 ( ) Jack has never bought a car.
- 33 ( ) How long are you at this school?
- 34 ( ) For many years local residents have gathered by the lake.
- 35 ( ) They have taken German since the first semester.
- 36 ( ) We all know about your marriage.
- 37 ( ) My dad has been playing golf, as usual.
- 38 ( ) Claire is learning French since she started school.
- 39 ( ) Why doesn't she go with her friends?
- 40 ( ) The band has been in town for more than a month.
- 41 ( ) I'm weighing less after the diet.
- 42 ( ) I've known Paul since college.
- 43 ( ) Our TV is always having problems.
- 44 ( ) Are you liking the Karate instructor?
- 45 ( ) Your brother has tried to reach you for three weeks.
- 46 ( ) Why haven't you been playing with your friends?
- 47 ( ) Bob works for British Airways for six years.
- 48 ( ) Do you still work hard like before?
- 49 ( ) Have you been working hard like when you were in college?
- 50 ( ) They need experienced teachers.
- 51 ( ) David still didn't buy the fax modem.
- 52 ( ) For nearly two weeks the company is trying to find a qualified candidate.
- 53 ( ) I haven't seen John these days.
- 54 ( ) What exactly do you do for a living?
- 55 ( ) My best friend is wanting to travel to Europe.
- 56 ( ) It's been hot all day tomorrow.
- 57 ( ) Jennifer is hating the idea of going to school in the summer.
- 58 ( ) Janis never borrowed my laptop.

- 59 ( ) They prefer to live close to downtown.
- 60 ( ) How have you been?
- 61 ( ) They're living in Texas since 1999.
- 62 ( ) Steve meets with his boss once a week.
- 63 ( ) The police has supported the program.
- 64 ( ) Nobody worries about air pollution.
- 65 ( ) Chris has just sent an e-mail.
- 66 ( ) My wife hates my new moustache.
- 67 ( ) Since that time the group has organized a number of meetings.
- 68 ( ) Mary doesn't play volleyball since last week.
- 69 ( ) My mom goes swimming on Sundays.
- 70 ( ) So far this year the group has visited several house projects.
- 71 ( ) Many parents already spoke with the principal.
- 72 ( ) I understand the difficulty of finding employment.
- 73 ( ) We're planning a farewell party for Ingrid.
- 74 ( ) Last year they published a book.
- 75 ( ) Tim hasn't seen his parents since he left home.
- 76 ( ) Mike still hasn't installed the new software.
- 77 ( ) Peter is working at the computer lab this semester.
- 78 ( ) Do you know where the post office is?
- 79 ( ) The telephone is ringing. Can you answer it for me?
- 80 ( ) She's taking a shower to go to school.
- 81 ( ) They come from a diverse background.
- 82 ( ) Robin has worked for Texaco for nine years.
- 83 ( ) I've seen that movie yesterday.
- 84 ( ) The project focuses on low-income families.
- 85 ( ) You look tired.
- 86 ( ) She has gone to church an hour ago.
- 87 ( ) They haven't studied hard right now.
- 88 ( ) I weigh less after I got married.
- 89 ( ) Tourists have been concerned with violence in New Orleans.
- 90 ( ) It has been warm lately.
- 91 ( ) The fish is smelling spoiled.
- 92 ( ) Susan has danced with this group for almost three months now.
- 93 ( ) I've lived in the US since 2001.
- 94 ( ) US citizens need to take the problem seriously.
- 95 ( ) I feel that the children need more fun.
- 96 ( ) He has come to church frequently.

## APPENDIX B

## Subject's Language Learning Calendar

[illegible]

## APPENDIX C

### Equivalent Forms in American English and Brazilian Portuguese

	AmE	BP
dynamic	I write I am writing I have written I have been writing I wrote I had written	escrevo estou escrevendo tenho escrito tenho estado escrevendo escrevi tinha escrito
stative	I like * I am liking I have liked * I have been liking I liked I had liked	gosto estou gostando tenho gostado * tenho estado gostando gostei tinha gostado

### VITA

Eleomarques Ferreira Rocha was born in Itamaraju in the state of Bahia, Northeastern Brazil. In 1998 he earned a Bachelor's degree in Portuguese & English Teaching from Universidade Federal da Bahia, located in Salvador, the capital of the state. His academic career has been marked by a high interest in applied linguistics and the Brazilian oral tradition, and he has worked as a research assistant in both fields. He is the author of a 1999 article entitled "A aprendizagem através do lúdico" [Learning through play]. He also contributed to the book *Almanaque do Roda-Pião* (2001) while he worked as a storyteller / researcher for an environmental program focusing on the preservation of Salvador's Atlantic Rainforest reserve. He has had permanent residence in Salvador for over ten years, where he has taught both English and Portuguese as a second language. Eleomarques first came to the University of New Orleans in 2000 as an exchange student. In 2002 he entered the Master's program in English Teaching. His plans are to continue studying applied linguistics and education at the PhD level, with a focus on Brazilian culture and music. Among his hobbies are chess, bike-riding, and web designing.